



**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
THURSDAY 06 JULY 2023 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE  
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

**PRESENT**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Ms J Bale           | South East/East Anglia                     |
| Mrs E Bostock       | South East/East Anglia                     |
| Mr A Dornford-Smith | Northern Ireland                           |
| Mr N Ellis          | Midlands                                   |
| Mrs J Gardner       | Midlands                                   |
| Mr J Hallam         | South/South West                           |
| Mr M Hallam         | North West                                 |
| Mrs S Hawkswell     | Scotland                                   |
| Mrs E Laing-Kay*    | North East (Items 1-7, up to paragraph 69) |
| Mrs S Robinson      | Wales                                      |
| Miss R Sargent      | North West                                 |
| Mr M Tait*          | South/South West                           |

\* Via Microsoft Teams

**IN ATTENDANCE**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Mrs H Kerfoot    | Interim Chief Operations Officer (Canine Activities)(Item 7, Paragraph 83 to the end) |
| Miss D Deuchar   | Head of Canine Activities   |
| Miss C McHardy   | Manager – Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team                        |
| Mrs A Bastick    | Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team                                     |
| Miss R Mansfield | Senior Officer – Working Dog Activities Team  |

**NOTE: any recommendations made by the Agility 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 HALLAM**

**ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Mr K Smith was not present. A brief discussion was held and it was decided that due to Mr Smith's ill health it would be necessary to seek a replacement representative for the North East. An advertisement would be published asking for nominations.

**ITEM 2. KENNEL CLUB RESEARCH PROJECT**

2. 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'.
3. The Council was advised that there was currently no update to share, and as such the presentation was not given. It was advised that an update would be provided at a later date when information became available.

**ITEM 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

**ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

5. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting held on 10 May 2023, approved the following amendments to H Regulations:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.e.

**TO:**

**e. Hoop-(Tyre)**

Aperture diameter 533mm minimum. Aperture centre from the ground: Large Dogs – 800mm. Intermediate Dogs – 650mm. Medium Dogs – 550mm. Small Dogs – 490mm. The hoop to be of a consistent shape, constructed of an impact-absorbing material. **All tyres should have bands diagonally opposite each other in contrast to its basic colour or segments in contrasting colours.** The tyre/hoop must be directly mounted in a substantial frame structure which must be secured in such a way that dogs cannot knock the obstacle over from either direction; the frame shall not have a beam across the top. All tyres must have easily displaced element(s). For saloon style tyres, both opening sides must have an ability to swing open to 90-140 degrees from the closed hoop position. They must not self-return and must be manually re-set.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

New Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(4)

**TO:**

**The first and last obstacles must be set a minimum of 5m from the edge of the ring, measured along the dog's most likely path when taking the obstacle, taking into account the dog's likely path from obstacle 1 to obstacle 2.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

New Regulation H(1)10.h.

**TO:**

**The handler must set their dog up to start within the ring. Dog and handler must enter the ring together and under no circumstances may a dog be left outside the ring off lead and recalled or sent to the handler in the ring.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

New Regulation H(1)10.b.

**TO:**

**The minimum space between adjacent rings marked only with single ropes is 5m. Where the distance is less than 5m at least one ring must have a visible barrier (such as netting). Entrances and exits from different rings should not be opposite each other to avoid congestion in these areas.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

New Regulation H(1)10.c.

**TO:**

**No dogs' crates or boxes should be left near or between rings. Societies may, if they wish, designate areas where dogs' crates and boxes may be left in the vicinity of the rings.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

### Capping Classes

#### Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A) 12.c

6. At its two previous meetings, the Council had discussed a proposal to reduce the capping limit on classes. Further discussion at the Activities Committee indicated that reducing the cap too low had the potential to result in very small classes. The Governance Panel had reconsidered these issues and had decided not to pursue the amendment.

7. A suggestion was made that reducing the cap was not required. The size of shows currently indicated that clubs were able to cap according to their venue capacity and were able to control numbers.
8. An opposing view was expressed in that not addressing the issue, it would reduce the potential for some indoor venues that were becoming more prevalent. It was considered that capping classes would allow better use of the indoor arenas and shows and not overwhelm judges with the high volume of classes.
9. It was emphasised that changing a regulation impacted the whole of agility. Should a reduced cap of 50 be brought in, there would be unforeseen consequences, as it would affect every capped show, not just those shows for which the cap was intended.
10. The Council noted the decision of the Governance Panel and as the matter had been discussed for some time, a show of hands was requested to indicate support of the decision of the Governance Panel.
11. A vote took place and the Council agreed not to pursue the matter further at this time.

#### A-frame and dog walk up contacts

12. At its last meeting the Council was in support of the principle of amending the marking of contacts and the Judging Panel was requested to formulate a revised proposal and agreed that the Panel should ensure that it did not penalise dogs which had a naturally long stride.
13. The Council considered the revised proposal submitted by the Judging Panel. The removal of judging the up contact for the dog walk was supported, however, it was considered that more research into the impact on dogs when traversing the A-frame might affect whether or not marking of the up contact on the A-frame was valuable.
14. There was a brief discussion involving feedback from the regions regarding why the see-saw had not been included in the regulation amendment. It was noted that the see-saw had not been considered an area of concern and that the current focus was on the A-frame and the dog walk.
15. A query arose regarding how judging may be affected with the change, suggesting it may be difficult to ascertain if the dog had approached the obstacle from the side. It was suggested that clarification was needed on how to address the different methods of traversing the dog walk, for example. It was considered that the diagrams which were being prepared as a guide would assist judges and help define the wording in the regulations.

16. A suggestion was also made that clear instructions on faults and marking for judges should be included when the regulation amendment notice was published.
17. Mr Tait on behalf of the Judges Panel volunteered to prepare the guidance and diagrams in anticipation of the regulation being approved.
18. It was also suggested that it be made clear that until such time as the amendment was approved and became effective, judges must continue to mark as per current regulations.
19. It was agreed that when the office published the list of regulation amendments, more information could be inserted for clarity.
20. Accordingly, the Council **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(18)

**TO:**

**A-frame and dog walk**

~~Contact area—5 faults for each failure to make contact.~~

**A-frame and dog walk approach contact: the dog must ascend onto the approach contact from the front and traverse over, but does not have to make contact with the approach contact area. Ascending onto the A-frame or dog walk from the side above the approach contact area - 5 faults.**

**A-frame and dog walk exit contact: the dog must touch the down contact zone with at least one paw or part of a paw. The dog is considered to have left the obstacle when all four paws are on the ground.**

**See-saw: the dog must touch both the up and down contact zones with at least one paw or part of a paw. Failure to do so – 5 faults each time it occurs.**

**The dog is considered to have left the obstacle when all four paws are on the ground.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Proposed amendments to Regulations H19.e. and H27.a.(7)

21. At its previous meeting the Council had been in support of amending the above regulations to enable judges to enter a dog recorded in their ownership. A formal proposal for a regulation change had been submitted for the Council's approval.
22. These amendments would allow a dog to be entered and handled by anyone, including someone else in the same household, or by the spouse of the judge. The dog would not be permitted to be entered in the same classes which the registered owner was judging, but could still enter the competition on the same day.

23. The proposal was seconded by Miss Sargent and the amendments were considered.
24. Clarity was sought on H27.a.(7) and whether the wording was correct as some had found it confusing. A short discussion took place but ultimately it was decided that the regulation was clear as proposed.
25. A vote took place and the majority voted to keep the wording as given in the proposal and **recommended** the following regulation amendments for approval:

Regulation H19.e.

**TO:**

Judges at an agility show may not **judge** ~~enter for competition~~ a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership; or handle a dog at the show/competition at which they are judging.  
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

Regulation H27.a.(7)

**TO:**

Disqualification and forfeit of awards

A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;

(7): **Judged by their registered owner or** ~~Entered for competition or~~ handled in the ring by a judge at that competition. This shall not apply to dogs owned by a judge appointed in an emergency.  
(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Non-slip tunnels

26. The Council had been in support of the Panels' recommendation that all tunnels should be made from non-slip materials and had requested the Panel to provide a proposal for consideration. A document was provided by the Equipment Panel which was discussed later in the meeting under Item 10, paragraphs 119 to 126.

Competition Manager's role

27. The above matter had been referred back to the Governance Panel for further consideration and the Panel's revised recommendations were discussed later in the meeting under Item 7, paragraphs 58 to 66.

Measuring Issues

28. The Council had previously discussed measuring issues and requested that the Governance Panel provide suitable proposals for further discussion. These proposals were discussed later in the meeting under Item 7, paragraphs 67 to 80.

Introduction of a 'Soft' Wall – Regulation H(1)(B)3.b.

29. At its previous meeting, the Council had discussed the introduction of a 'soft' wall and had been in support of the principle for the soft wall to

replace the current design as soon as possible. A proposal was provided by the Judging Panel and discussed later in the meeting under Item 8, paragraphs 82 to 85.

Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards & Guide to Agility Equipment

30. The Council was informed by the office that the document was in the final stages of proofing and would then be formatted for the website. Due to staffing resources across The Kennel Club it was not possible to determine the exact timeframe for this but it was hoped it would be in the near future.
31. Mrs Hawkswell advised that a diagram which showed the curvature of the tunnel and the distance between the tunnels needed to be replaced with a more suitable diagram. No change to the text was required and an updated diagram would be provided.
32. The Council noted that once the document had been reviewed by The Kennel Club marketing team, it would be placed on The Kennel Club website. Yearly updates would be monitored by the agility members who sat on the Activities Judges Sub-Group as part of the work that happened each year to update relevant documents due to regulation changes coming into effect.
33. A query arose regarding whether some of the items within the document, which were not specifically directed to judges, should not also be considered by another panel, other than the Activities Judges Sub-Group. It was pointed out that the document was primarily a judges' education document and as such sat with the Sub-Group, however the members of the Sub-Group were well versed in agility and would be able to review the document as a whole.
34. The Council was advised that the review had changed the document slightly in that other documents which had been replicated in the guide had been removed and replaced with links to those documents. It was acknowledged that keeping track of amendments would be much easier if they were only required to be updated in one place.
35. Concern had been expressed that the content may be affected, however, the Council was assured that the document had just been condensed to make it more accessible. No content had been changed.
36. The Council queried how the document would be updated if there were urgent changes needed outside of the yearly review. It was assured that once the document was on the website it would be easy to update should it be necessary.

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

37. The Council noted a written report following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 17 April 2023.

38. Mr Tait explained that Wet Bulb Globe Thermometers (WBGTs), which had been purchased by The Kennel Club to assist with research, would be used at various high profile agility events such as the Junior Open Agility World Championships and the International Agility Festival to track heat and weather conditions. The WBGTs measured a number of variables relating to heat stress including temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, cloud cover and solar radiation.
39. Guidance would be issued for societies on heat mitigation at events and further guidance would be issued, aimed at the public, to assure them that dog's welfare was being prioritised. Consideration of the effects on humans also needed to be included in any study and a substantial amount of data had been completed in respect of athletes performing in different temperatures.
40. It was also advised that accelerometers, which had been purchased for use in research, had been used at Lune Valley Dog Training Club's agility show where a masters research student performed tests to complete a validation study to calibrate the equipment for use as a research tool.
41. A brief discussion took place regarding the see-saw research and the Council was asked what objectives it would like to note. It was noted that the issue related to the equipment itself and not the impact on the dog and therefore it was felt that this topic should go to the Equipment Panel, where it would assess the different see-saws in use.

## **ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

42. The Council noted a verbal update from the Equipment Panel.
43. There had been some enquiries about the tyre and ensuring that the tyre would only swing open to between 90-140 degrees as dictated in the regulations and would not swing all the way round.
44. It was also noted that there had been some concern over the jump cups used by Galican, in that the cups had the potential to be knocked down the wing, thereby changing the height of the bar during competition. The Panel was in the process of speaking to the equipment supplier to determine what could be done to resolve the issue, noting the issue was not unique to UK equipment.
45. The Panel then went on to discuss the use of a collapsible jump bar for the rising spread jump. It was noted that one supplier already had one available and in use internationally and another supplier had a prototype. A query was raised as to whether the bar had been approved for use as a new piece of equipment. The Panel had been informed by the supplier



who was using the bar that they had been given approval by The Kennel Club.

46. The office investigated and it appeared that there had been some confusion on the part of the supplier when it was approved as a new supplier in the UK. It was accepted that it was not clear that new pieces of equipment, that are not already in use and deviated from the regulations, needed to be approved for use by the Equipment Panel as specified in regulation H(1)(B)3.
47. This led to a discussion on the best way to test new pieces of equipment under competition parameters without potentially affecting a dog's run. It was suggested that testing could be carried out in conjunction with a show but in a properly managed practice ring. Those taking part in the testing would need to be made aware that they were testing an unapproved piece of equipment.
48. A suggestion was made that equipment suppliers should be written to informing them of the process for approval of new equipment as well as amending the approval letters to make it clearer. The office agreed to undertake this action.
49. A suggestion was made that clear printed instructions on how to set up equipment should be provided by equipment suppliers so that everyone involved in building a course could refer to them. The council agreed to discuss this with the relevant equipment suppliers.
50. A query was raised as to whether the jump cups that were causing issues should be removed from use until such time as the issue had been resolved. It was stated that another piece of equipment that was under investigation for potential issues was still in use and as such it was not felt that the suppliers should be treated differently. It was also noted that the jump cup suppliers had issued a video to clarify how to set them up to help mitigate some of the problems reported.
51. A brief discussion ensued, clarifying when an approach to the Equipment Panel was needed, especially relating to smaller clubs who may manufacture their own equipment. It was clarified that so long as the equipment conformed to the specifications in the H Regulations then this would not need approval from the Equipment Panel. However, if a piece of equipment deviated from the accepted standard or behaved in a different way to usual, such as when the breakaway tyres were brought in, then the Equipment Panel should be approached for approval.
52. The Council noted that it was clear that firm specifications for equipment was needed, so that new equipment suppliers knew precisely what was expected.

53. A query was raised as to the progress on approving new measuring hoops. It was agreed that this was not specifically for the Equipment Panel as it related to measuring, but could be discussed.
54. The equipment supplier who had been approached to become an approved supplier of measuring hoops had decided that it did not wish to pursue this and would not be manufacturing measuring hoops.
55. It was noted that there were some other suppliers who could be approached and it was agreed that this should be actioned as currently there was only one manufacturer of measuring hoops.
56. A brief discussion followed on the reason that dogs were measured using a hoop as opposed to any alternative method. The office advised the Council that this had previously been a topic of discussion at the Activities Health and Welfare Sub Group and, following research at Surrey University on various measuring methods, it had come to the conclusion that measuring hoops were as accurate as any other method of measurement and were cheaper than most. It was suggested that should the Council wish to revisit the discussion that it could be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

57. The Council considered a written report from Mrs Hawkswell.
 

Competition Manager's role
58. A proposal to amend Regulation H(1)9.c and to propose an Annex H(1)E had been discussed at the last three Council meetings and the Governance Panel was tasked with reviewing the proposals due to various issues raised and to prepare a revised proposal for consideration.
59. It was agreed that the role of the competition manager was not clearly defined in the regulations, with only one regulation specifically referencing the role and the need to name the competition manager on the schedule. It was intended that the proposal would clarify the responsibilities of the role and the skills needed to undertake it.
60. A query was raised as to why it would not be possible to allow a group of individuals to undertake the responsibilities as opposed to having to name a specific individual. However, it was noted that a point of contact was necessary, though the named individual would, where necessary, involve other relevant people. It was also noted that this suggestion was not part of the proposal and had not been given due consideration by the agility community.
61. Another suggestion was that the competition manager be allowed to compete or should be a reserve judge or judge at the show, which would enable someone with knowledge of agility to be able to take on the role

without sacrificing competing at the show. This was not thought feasible or appropriate as the competition manager should be available at any time to deal with issues, and if they were competing or judging then this would not be the case. Additionally, if the person were to be competing in a ring where a query occurred there could be the perception of unfairness. It was also noted that these were also not part of the proposal as it stood and had not been part of the area discussions.

62. It was noted that specimen schedules currently stated that a 'show/competition' manager should be listed on the schedule, which did not mirror the regulation wording. The office agreed to get this amended.
63. The Council went on to discuss whether the competition manager should be expected to take the online agility judges' exam in order to ensure that they were up to date with the regulations. It had been included in the proposal to ensure that the person who would be responsible for ensuring the show complied to the regulations was conversant in the regulations themselves. However, it was noted that this would be a deterrent to someone taking on the role, and that any lack of expertise could be supplemented by other individuals at the show.
64. The Council was reminded that the topic had been under discussion for a while and it needed to be resolved. The Activities Judges' Sub Group had previously expressed frustration at the length of time it had been under discussion and at its last meeting reminded the Council that it did not need to be unduly onerous.
65. The Council briefly discussed the removal of 1.b on the proposed annex, noting it would retain the description of the roles and responsibilities but remove a barrier to people undertaking the position.
66. A vote took place and a majority voted to **recommend** to remove 1.b in the new annex and **recommend** to approve the remainder of the proposal.

New Regulation H(1)10.c.

**TO:**

**The person appointed as Competition Manager should be aware of their responsibilities as laid out in Annex H(1)(E) of these regulations and should meet the criteria for this role.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

New Annex H(1)(E)

**TO:**

**INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE DUTIES OF AGILITY COMPETITION MANAGERS**

**1. Experiences and Qualifications**

The Competition Manager should have a sound knowledge of the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations, and a familiarity with the Kennel Club complaints procedure.

## 2. Responsibilities

- a. The Competition Manager's responsibilities are to at all times ensure that competitors and judges abide by the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations.
- b. The Competition Manager acts as decision maker in all matters relating to the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations for the duration of the show.
- c. The Competition Manager must fully document all decisions and actions taken in relation to the H Regulations in the show's Kennel Club incident book.
- d. The Competition Manager supports the show management team in the smooth running of the show.

## 3. Duties

- a. The show committee shall appoint a Competition Manager whose name must be announced in the schedule, and who must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership or handle any dog at the show.
- b. In the event of extreme adverse conditions at a show a judge may remove mandatory equipment from a class as deemed appropriate at the time but must always obtain full agreement of the Competition Manager, unless in an emergency situation. The Competition Manager must be advised of the change and the reasons for it at the earliest opportunity. Any alterations must be recorded in the Incident Book and be reported, by the show management, to the Kennel Club within 14 days of the date of the show.
- c. Should a judge be prevented from completing a class which has already started, the Competition Manager shall decide what action is to be taken. Guidance is covered in the Guidance for Agility Judges and Stewards.
- d. The Competition Manager and the show management must act to remove a dog from the show under the conditions of Regulation H13.
- e. If there are any concerns over the suitability of a course the Competition Manager must consult with the relevant judge, and if available Accredited Trainers, and agree the proposed course of action
- f. Any complaints or matters arising at the show should be referred, in the first instance to the Competition Manager, who may consult with other members of the show team before taking appropriate action. All incidents, even if they are resolved on the day of the show, must be recorded in the Incident Book and be reported, by the show management, to the Kennel Club within 14 days of the date of the show.

(Insertion in bold)

Measuring issues

67. The Council had agreed at its previous meeting that it wished to recommend that all dogs, including 'obviously large' dogs would need a measurement before competing, thereby removing the owner's ability to declare their dog 'large'.
68. It was clarified that while all dogs would need a first measurement in order to compete, the second measurement for 'obviously large' dogs could still be struck out in agreement between the owner and the measurers. This would ensure that dogs were jumping the appropriate height. It was confirmed that this would not be retrospective and dogs competing in large who had not had a measure would not be required to have one.
69. It was queried why it was being changed as it was only in the recent past that the requirement for all dogs to have a first measure had been removed from the regulations. The reason for the initial change was because there were only three heights, small, medium and large, and as such it was very clear when a dog would be 'obviously large'. However, with the introduction of the intermediate height it was considered less clear when a dog would obviously measure into the large height and it was considered to be more beneficial to the dogs' welfare to confirm the height through measuring.
70. Some feedback had been received that it would be necessary to recruit new measurers before implementing the new regulations as it was not felt there were sufficient numbers of measurers to deal with the additional work. However, the office confirmed that nearly 100 new measurers had been appointed in the last year, with more to be assessed in the coming months. Therefore, it was not felt that measurers would be overstretched with the change.
71. A brief discussion occurred on what this would mean for dogs competing overseas, particularly those competing in FCI competitions as the height categories differed. The current regulations allowed an owner to either not enter their dog into the measuring process to compete in large, or to request their dog be moved up to the next higher height, enabling them to compete in large in the UK and FCI, opening up further competing opportunities. The proposed changes would mean that this would no longer be an option and support the health and welfare of dogs.
72. The Council decided that the two separate regulation amendments needed to be considered together as the representatives could not vote on one without knowing the outcome of the other.
73. The Council therefore chose to vote on amending the following regulations as a whole:

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)4.**TO:**

- (2) ~~Dogs competing in small, medium, or intermediate height categories~~ **All dogs** must be measured for competition and must be at least 15 months old before their first measurement. Competitors must ensure that their dog is measured prior to their first competition and that the dog's Agility Record Book has been signed and dated by the measuring officials.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

**TO:**

- ~~(4) Large dogs entered for competition will not require an official Kennel Club measurement. Once a dog has competed in any Class in the Large Height category at a Kennel Club licensed event it may not change to a different height.~~

(Deletion struck through and subsequent paragraphs renumbered)

**TO:**

- (12) A dog will be eligible to compete in ~~small, medium or intermediate height categories~~ only after the official measurement has been carried out. Where a dog is measured out of the height category in which it has been entered it is permissible, at the discretion of the organising club, for entries to be altered in order that the dog can compete at the correct height category.

(Deletion struck through)

**TO:**

- ~~(20) At any time should an owner request to move a dog into the next higher height category they may do so, and it will be for the lifetime of the dog, with no further changes of height permitted. If the dog's owner(s) wish to take this course of action the dog's record book should, with the written permission of the owner(s) or in the presence of an owner, be signed by 2 senior measurers without being measured. In the case of a dog in joint ownership written permission must be provided from all of the owners. Alternatively the record book should be sent to the Kennel Club with a request that the dog's height be amended with a letter from the owner(s) giving consent for this to happen~~

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

74. The Council voted by a small majority to **recommend** the above regulations.
75. It was noted that the Kennel Club Code of Best Practice For Measuring Agility Dog Heights would need updating and reissuing which the office would action during the yearly regulation amendment updates.

76. It was also noted that once the appointment of new measurers was complete it would then be necessary to look at whether additional senior measurers should be appointed as well as the issue of the re-accreditation of existing measurers.
77. A query was raised regarding whether dogs measured in the Republic of Ireland were required to have an official Kennel Club measurement before competing at Kennel Club licensed agility shows. It was clarified that a dog that had been through the measuring process in the Republic of Ireland could compete at that height in the UK without needing to obtain a UK measurement, the same as any other dog coming to compete from abroad.
78. It was further clarified that dogs needed to be registered with The Kennel Club in order to compete at Kennel Club agility shows, whether that was on the Breed Register, Activity Register or with an Authority to Compete (ATC) number.
79. There was confusion over the difference in height between the IKC and UK Kennel Club and it was agreed that this would be looked at and an update and clarification would be published.  
*(Afternote: It was subsequently clarified that the new IKC heights were the same as the FCI heights and as such IKC dogs would continue to compete in the height they were measured at in the Republic of Ireland.)*
80. Mrs H Kerfoot was welcomed to the meeting and introduced as the Interim Chief Operations Officer for Canine Activities, taking over from Vanessa McAlpine and Kathryn Mansfield who had recently retired.

**ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL AND OTHER JUDGING ISSUES**

81. The Council considered a report from the Judging Panel and discussed issues arising from the report.
- Introduction of a 'Soft' Wall
82. At its previous meeting the Council had supported the principle for the introduction of a 'soft' wall to replace the current design as soon as possible.
83. The Council considered the following proposal:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.b**TO:**

Wall – The height of the wall must be 600mm for Large Dogs, 500mm for Intermediate Dogs, 400mm for Medium Dogs and 300mm for Small Dogs. Width: 1.2m minimum. All central units must be easily displaced by the dog and not interlocking with the pillars. Pillars with a minimum height of 900mm must be used. **Central elements should have a uniform depth of 200mm. All elements must be made of an impact-absorbing material.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective January 2025 to provide sufficient time for equipment suppliers to replace equipment).

84. A query was raised as to whether it was sufficient to just stipulate that all elements should be made of impact-absorbing material, and not the whole piece of equipment. After a brief discussion the Council agreed that further clarification was needed in the regulation wording and proposed the following amendment:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.b**TO:**

Wall – The height of the wall must be 600mm for Large Dogs, 500mm for Intermediate Dogs, 400mm for Medium Dogs and 300mm for Small Dogs. Width: 1.2m minimum. All central units must be easily displaced by the dog and not interlocking with the pillars. Pillars with a minimum height of 900mm must be used. **Central elements should have a uniform depth of 200mm. The wall must be constructed of an impact-absorbing material.**

(Insertion in bold)

85. This amendment was proposed by Mrs Hawkswell and seconded by Mr Ellis and the Council unanimously voted to **recommend** the proposal. It was suggested that the effective date would be 1 January 2025 to provide sufficient time for equipment suppliers to replace equipment.

Dogs re-negotiating equipment

86. At its last meeting the Council requested that the Judges Panel considered the situation of dogs re-negotiating equipment. The Judges Panel had discussed it and agreed that it was not a priority at this time and no further discussion was needed.

Activities Judges Sub-Group

87. The Council considered a written report from Mrs Gardner following the meeting of the Sub-Group held on 25 April 2023.



88. It noted that an advert for applications for new accredited trainers for agility would be issued shortly and successful applicants would be invited to an assessment day on 12 September 2023.
89. Once new trainers had been recruited a day would be organised for all agility accredited trainers to run through the practical seminar.
90. A query was raised regarding updates to the online agility videos. The office confirmed that the necessary amendments had been flagged but budget and resourcing meant it had not been possible to action the updates yet. However, it was noted that a disclaimer had been placed on the videos to inform viewers that certain regulations may have changed and to refer to the H regulations for the most up to date regulations.
91. It was requested that the questions for the online exam be sent to the Judging Panel to work on any necessary updates. The office agreed to send these over.

**ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

92. No proposals were received.

**ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Introduction of a Micro Height

93. The Council was requested by Mrs Bostock, on behalf of Ms Wheeler to consider the introduction of a micro height for very small dogs with a jump height of 20cm in agility competitions. Currently, very small dogs were struggling to compete against the small dogs due, in part, to factors such as the delayed tip on the seesaw due to their lighter weight.
94. Ms Wheeler had suggested that this could begin with the introduction of a micro option within the small classes, allowing the smallest of dogs to jump 20cm with a combined result. It was anticipated that in time, more people would start competing instead of just training these micro dogs and demand would increase to warrant a separate height.
95. It had been brought up in the area meetings that should micro height be brought in, some show organisers would not be inclined to hold classes for them as it would not be financially viable. It was queried whether this had been an issue when intermediate was introduced. It was noted that it had been easier to estimate the need for intermediate classes as these dogs were already competing in the large height, whereas micro height dogs may not be competing due to not being able to compete with the small dogs.
96. The Council agreed that, in principle, the idea had merit, however, a comment was made that the introduction of a new height would have a significant impact on all of agility, such as measuring, prestige events

and championship classes and as such it would need to be considered properly.

97. It was also noted that currently only heights were different for dogs, while the rest of the equipment was standardised. The question was asked whether this would require a wider review to discover whether all the obstacles would be suitable for micro height dogs.
98. A suggestion was made that data could be used from UKA shows which did have micro height to determine the potential impact of the introduction in Kennel Club agility, noting that similar data had been used during the introduction of the intermediate height.
99. A query was raised as to how this would affect the grade progression and whether a review would be needed, however this was not included in the discussion item and would need to be considered at another meeting if it was felt it was needed, noting the issue was already on the Governance Panel's agenda.
100. Statistics on the percentage of a dogs height a dog was jumping during competition were brought up, noting that small dogs could potentially be jumping up to 150% of their height. It was agreed that this was a much larger percentage than other heights and added weight to the proposal on welfare grounds.
101. Another query was raised regarding whether it would be mandatory that micro height dogs would be included in prestige events and championship classes. It was noted that when intermediate was introduced, that had split the large height and as such sufficient numbers would be competing to warrant it, and additionally the impact of introducing an extra height to these prestige events had not been fully considered.
102. It was concluded that it would be necessary that the topic be referred to the Governance Panel for full consideration of the bigger picture.

#### Continuing Personal Development (CPD)

103. The Council was requested by Mr Tait to discuss CPD within the agility community in respect of judges, and to gain insight on how it could support judges in their development by providing guidance and CPD in a formal way.
104. Mr Tait had suggested that the role of judge's trainers could be changed from training new judges to providing assessments/support to existing judges, with the training of new judges becoming a secondary role.
105. The Council was in agreement that CPD was necessary and that more could be done to facilitate it, however, realistically the number of accredited trainers didn't support Mr Tait's suggestion noting the current difficulties in arranging mentors and championship judge assessments.

106. It was suggested that online meetings could be held for existing judges and it was confirmed that this had already been listed as a discussion item for the next Activities Judges Sub Group meeting. It was again noted that resourcing of accredited trainers would be needed to facilitate this.
107. It was questioned whether championship judges who had expressed an interest in mentoring new judges were still being contacted to undertake mentoring. The office agreed to ensure this was being done. However, it was noted that some championship judges had not been through the judges' training due to having been approved prior to its implementation and as such, was it appropriate for them to be undertaking judges' mentoring. It was agreed that this should be considered by the Judges' Sub Group.
108. It was agreed that there was a need for compulsory CPD to be introduced for championship judges, however it was recognised that the number of accredited trainers would not support this at this time. The issue of up to date information on judges was noted as an area of concern that would require discussion.
109. It was therefore agreed that CPD was needed but it would need to be reconsidered when further accredited trainers had been appointed. Therefore, the topic would be referred to the Annual Accredited Trainer's Seminar and Activities Judges Sub Group for discussion as well as the Judges Panel.

#### Equipment variations

110. The Council was requested by Mr Tait to discuss whether there was a need to re-visit the topic of standardising certain pieces of equipment, further to the work the Council was already doing on regulating equipment, noting that the length and diameter of jump poles still varied.
111. It was also noted that there was a lot of variation of tunnel straps provided by equipment suppliers and there was nothing in the regulations stating how wide they should be. This meant that the appropriate number of tunnel straps could be provided, but give less coverage than if given fewer tunnel straps.
112. It was agreed that this needed consideration and referred the matter to the Equipment Panel to review all equipment and whether any changes were needed.
113. It was requested that weave poles should be included in the review, including the difference between wooden and plastic poles and the way this affected dogs navigation of the equipment, noting the difference in flex between the two materials. It was agreed that this would be included in the review and it was noted that a study on this topic was available and should be used to inform discussions.

Judging queries

114. The Council was requested by Mr Tait to discuss whether there should be a formal process for when judging queries arose at shows and dealt with on the day by members of the Council and Activities Judges Sub Group, noting an instance of this occurring at a recent show. The Kennel Club had been informed of the decision reached and requested to post clarification online.
115. The Council did not feel that it was necessary to formalise the process and that queries could be dealt with on an ad hoc basis as had been done previously.

Course Design

116. The Council was requested by Mr Tait, on behalf of Ms T Davis, to discuss whether the overall course distance should be reduced based on dog grades.
117. Ms Davis suggested that currently young dogs and new handlers would be demotivated by longer courses and it would benefit them to build up by competing on shorter courses. It was also suggested that setting some parameters (min and max) within the measuring matrix could increase judges confidence in their course design.
118. The Council did not support the suggestion and did not recommend any change to course distances or the course time matrix. However, a brief discussion on grade appropriate course design took place and it was agreed that should be brought back to the next meeting by the Judging Panel which was already in the process of developing guidance.

Non-slip tunnels

119. The Council was requested by Mr Ellis to consider an in-depth report submitted by Ms G Lott, an agility competitor, on research she had undertaken as to which materials would work best for the safety of dogs. The document included a number of suggested regulation amendments for the Council to consider.
120. It was agreed that standardisation of tunnels was necessary but that the use of 'non-slip' as a descriptor could potentially cause issues if a dog were to slip and it could even lead to the removal of tunnels as an obstacle.
121. It was felt that a number of things could be reviewed in the short term involving minimal change or expense, such as the weight of the material, the diameter between the wire hoops and the weight of the wire.
122. Reviewing the above along with the guidance which would be included in the new Code of Best Practice for Agility Judges and Guide to Agility

Equipment would help to ensure that the use of the tunnel was safer and more uniform.

123. It was felt that the issue of the material that tunnels were made from was a larger area of research that needed to be undertaken to ensure that any changes made were appropriate and effective. The research needed to be broad and impartial.
124. In light of this, it was suggested that tunnels which were made of half non-slip material should not be used until such time as the research was completed. It was noted that this would only effect one supplier and it would be possible to allow a 'phasing out' of these tunnels.
125. It was reiterated that equipment suppliers should issue guidance on how to set up equipment, including how to secure tunnels safely.
126. Ms Lott was thanked for her comprehensive report and the topic would be taken away for further consideration by the Equipment Panel. The office would contact equipment suppliers to ask that the half non-slip tunnels not be used due to research being undertaken.

**ITEM 11. STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

127. The Council noted the current strategy document and agreed that it would be updated in light of the discussions in the meeting.

**ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

128. A query was raised on the issue of grade progression between the Irish Kennel Club agility shows and Kennel Club agility shows. It was clarified that the office was aware of issues that had arisen with this and it was due to be discussed by the Activities Committee at its next meeting.

**ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

129. The date of the Council's next meeting would be announced in September 2023.
130. The meeting closed at 4.20 pm.

**MR M HALLAM**  
**Chairman**

***THE KENNEL CLUB'S STRATEGIC AIMS***

- *Champion the wellbeing of dogs*
- *Safeguard and enhance the future of pedigree dogs, addressing breed-associated health issues*
- *Protect the future of dog activities together with our grassroots network*
- *Become relevant to more dog owners to increase our impact*
- *Deliver an excellent member experience and widen our community*

- *Ensure we are financially secure and sustainable*