

**MEETING OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
TUESDAY 16 MAY 2023 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

A G E N D A

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**ITEM 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15
MAY 2022**

The Council is requested to approve the minutes of the meeting.
(Annex A refers)

**ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE
FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF
RECOMMENDATIONS)**

- a. The Council is invited to note the Results of Recommendations document.
(Annex B refers)
- b. Handlers with more than one dog
As noted within the Results of Recommendations document, a working party named the Retriever Field Trials Working Party has been formed to consider issues relating to handlers with more than one dog.

At its initial meeting, the Working Party acknowledged that there was a perception within the field trialling community that there was unfairness, but wished to obtain a clear and balanced view as to whether this was actually the case, and if so, to what extent, prior to making any recommendations. Accordingly it agreed that it was necessary to carry out further detailed research, and undertook to do so.

The Council is invited to note an update.

- c. Dogs entered at more than one trial on the same day
This issue is also being considered by the Retriever Field Trials Working Party and an update will be provided.

ITEM 4. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

- a. German Longhaired Pointer Club
Proposed amendment to Regulation J(E)1.

Mr D Elliott

The Council is invited to consider the following proposal in respect of breeds which hunt, point and retrieve:

Regulation J(E)1. Basic Requirements

TO:

Dogs shall be required to quarter ground systematically in search of quarry (hereafter game), to point game, to flush on command, to be steady to flush, shot and fall, and to retrieve tenderly to hand on command (**all elements to be tested**).

Any dog that does not fulfil the basic requirements shall not receive an award or a Certificate of Merit.

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale

It has been noted that some competitors, and also A Panel/B Panel judges are unaware that the basic requirements of a dog which hunts points and retrieves are that it needs to be tested for steadiness, for flush, shot AND fall i.e. a dog has not been tested for steadiness to the fall if a bird was pointed in a wood, and shot by a gun on the flank in the field. So the dog would have been tested for flush and shot, but NOT the fall.

- b. German Shorthaired Pointer Club Mr D Elliot
Use of grounds for HPR field trials

The Council is requested to discuss the following proposal:

New regulation (location within J Regulations to be agreed)

No ground will be used by an HPR club, society or association for field trials on more than two occasions in any single field trial season.

(Insertion in bold)

Note: a discussion item on the same issue has been submitted by Mr J Bird and appears on the agenda at item 5.f.

- c. Bristol And West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(iv)

The Society wishes the Council to consider the following proposed amendment:

Regulation J4.c.(1)(iv) Application and documentation

TO:

(iv) The date, ~~and place~~ **locality and county** of the field trial. ~~and~~, **Where** ~~where~~ the time and ~~place~~ **venue** of the meeting are not included, a statement that the time and ~~place~~ **venue** of the meeting will be communicated to competitors separately, and by what means.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Rationale

Some societies state only the name of the host shoot in their schedule. The Society is of the view that this is insufficient. It is unreasonable and unacceptable to expect competitors, new or old, to know where a named shoot might be based in the country, and have to make an entry without being sure of the precise location. Competitors would only receive details once the draw has taken place. To produce a schedule for publication, the field trial secretary must have this basic geographical information beforehand so there seems to be no reason why it should not be published. Doing so would give potential entrants an idea of where in the country the event is to take place before they make an entry especially as many clubs hold trials outside their 'natural' area.

Societies should not rely on competitors to make searches on the internet, or seek further information from the field trial secretary, especially as not all can be assumed to have internet access and this could disadvantage them.

- d. Bristol And West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)

The Society would like the Council to consider amendments to the above regulation relating to the schedule, in order to assist field trial secretaries with administration.

Regulation J4.c.(1)

TO:

- (viii) The latest date for receiving applications for entry (**see J.6 c**)
- (ix) The date, place and time of the draw, and the method of notifying the full result to all entrants. **Notification to competitors should take place not less than 14 days prior to the stake (unless there is a need for a redraw).**

(Insertions in bold)

Rationale

Regulation J.6.c. (entries) refers to closing dates, stating a minimum closing date of 14 days prior to a stake, but this does not appear under Regulation J.4. (application and documentation). The proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(viii) brings the closing date requirement to the attention of field trial secretaries.

The proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(ix) leaves no ambiguity as to when competitors might expect to receive the draw. This would give them more time to make personal arrangements and may potentially reduce the number of withdrawals.

- e. Bristol And West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Proposal to amend J4.c.(1) Application and documentation

The Council is requested to consider the following proposed amendment:

Regulation J4.c.(1)(xii)

TO:

(1) The schedule must contain:

(xiii) The contact details of the Field Trial Secretary.

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale

Although it may seem obvious to include this information on a schedule so that competitors have a means directly to communicate with the organiser, it is not a requirement in the existing regulation. The draft schedule provided by The Kennel Club includes these details so The Kennel Club must consider them to be of value.

- f. Bristol And West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Proposed amendment to Regulation J(F)1 Show Gundog Working Certificate

The Society requests the Council to consider an amendment to the J regulations, as follows:

Regulation J(F)1

TO:

The Show Gundog Working Certificate is not a qualification in itself, however, when awarded it enables the 'Sh' to be removed from the title of 'Show Champion' and the letters SGWC ~~may~~ **must** be used after the dog's name on entry forms and in show catalogues.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Rationale

The club notes that there are two routes to the Champion title and after a discussion at a 'grass roots' meeting of competitors it was agreed that dogs which gained their title via a field trial should hold a higher distinction than those who gain it via a SGWC. Therefore, to make that distinction recognisable the word 'may' was deemed inappropriate and too open-ended; the word 'must' would avoid confusion.

- g. Bristol And West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.d.(2)(iv)

The Society wishes to propose the following amendment to remove the necessity for the inclusion of the addresses of owners on the card:

Regulation J4.d.(2)(iv)

TO:

Entries listed as follows:

Registered name and number of dog and/or Stud Book number.

Name of owner(s).

Breed of dog.

~~Address of owner(s), unless requested by the owners(s) to be withheld for publication.~~

Sex of dog.

Date of birth of dog.

Registered name of sire and dam.
 Name of breeder.
 Name of handler.

Rationale

The Society feels that the inclusion of addresses is no longer a necessary requirement and removing it would reduce the risk of exposing personal data, for example should the card be discarded. As the option exists for handlers not to have this data published there would appear to be no need for it. This would reduce the administration needed to produce a card.

h. Mr N Wroe

Experience required for judges

The Council is requested to consider a proposal whereby judges would judge to the level they have achieved in competition. This may not necessarily be a win, but the aim is to put flesh on the so-called 'modicum of success' requirement, and where J5a.(1) stipulates "practical experience of ... field trials", then before accepting an invitation to judge a particular stake, the judge must have previously achieved, say, a 1st – 3rd place in competition in stakes at the level they have been invited to judge. The judge can simply be asked by the appointing society through the field trial secretary, much as judges are often asked to confirm that they have passed the seminar examination.

Background

Mr Wroe is of the view that field trial secretaries are poorly served by The Kennel Club's field trial judges' informational system as listings of Panel judges do not for example reveal whether particular judges on the A and B Panels have passed the judges' seminar examination, or have 'grandfather rights, and whether or not they are currently active (i.e. it is not discernible when they last judged a field trial), and crucially, the level at which they have achieved success in field trials.

Moreover, it is considered that some Panel judges have very little experience of success in field trials. The problem is particularly acute in HPRs where the requirement to advance through the Panels makes no stipulation as to success in field trials, such as is required for Retrievers and Spaniels (see J5.c.(3)).

The Kennel Club Guide for Field Trial judges (October 2021) simply states 'Ideally you should have at least 5 years' experience of competing before you judge for the first time', but does not require having attained success at any level in competition, nor is the 5 years' experience mandatory.

Proposed Remedy

A multi-pronged approach can achieve the desired aim of ensuring that judges selected for appointments have achieved competitive success in

field trials. Mr Nigel Wroe wishes to propose the following amendments to the regulations:

Regulation J5. Judges

a. Appointment

(1) The judges shall be appointed by the society holding the trial which must satisfy itself that the persons being invited to judge have practical experience of both field trials and the shooting field. **Judges to have previously achieved a place in stakes at the level to which their invitation applies.**

(Insertion in bold)

Proposed Insertion of a new J5.c.(5)

Regulation J5.c. *Qualifications for Panels*

(5) Prospective judges for HPRs, before being added to the B panel, should have won a 1st in a Novice stake and achieved a 1st – 3rd place at an All-Aged stake.

(Insertion in bold)

Previous J5.c.(5) to become J5.c.(6) and J5.c.(6) to become J5.c.(7)

Prospective judges, principally non-Panel, to be asked by Field Trial secretaries if they have passed the judges' exam, and if they have been trialling for at least 5 years.

Application forms to the A and to the B panel for HPRs to include a new element box to capture details of the requisite competition success which is to be a mandatory requirement.

Clearly, as is so often the case, existing judges may need to be exempted to a set degree, depending on whether they are non-Panel aspiring to B Panel, or B Panel aspiring to A Panel.

- i. Mr N Wroe
Show Gundog Working Certificate – proposal to remove the water test requirement to enter and swim and retrieve as per rule J(F)7(g)
 Mr Wroe proposes, for the purposes of an award of a SGWC, to remove the requirement for all retrieving breeds to enter water freely, swim and retrieve as part of the SGWC requirements by deleting Regulation J(F)7g in its entirety as follows:

Regulation J(F)7g.

For all retrieving breeds, that the dog entered water freely, and swam ~~and retrieved.~~ [If a natural retrieve from water is not possible then a dummy may be used and if suitable water is not available the dog is permitted to undertake a special water test as soon as possible after the day, but between 1 September and 1 April, which will be recognised by the issue of a certificate, to be signed by two field trial panel judges, one of whom must be on the 'A' Panel.]

(Additions in bold, deletions struck out.)

Rationale

Until Regulation J(E)10, which defined the Water Test for HPRs as a water retrieve, was abolished with effect from 2 February 2022, the SGWC water retrieve was broadly in conformance with the Novice field trial level water retrieve. However there appears to have been an oversight which led to the Water Test for HPRs undertaking a SGWC continuing to be a water retrieve, as for all retrieving breeds taking the SGWC. This remains the case in the new J Regulations effective from 2 February 2023. There is no reason for this anomaly to be perpetuated, which effectively asks more for show gundogs to gain their SGWC than for a trialling dog to become a FT Champion [Regulation J(A)2(a)] refers].

For example, Regulation J(A)2(a) requires a trialling dog to enter water freely and swim, whereas a show dog under existing Regulation J(F)7(g) requires the addition of having to retrieve.

Example: Just recently, at an end of season HPR Field Trial at which one dog was running for a SGWC, the trialling dogs did not have to undertake a water test of any nature, whereas the show gundog was expected to enter the water freely, swim and retrieve dead game ('natural retrieve') or a dummy.

- j. Mr N Wroe
Proposed amendment to Regulation J(E)2 to increase the upper limit of runners in HPR trials

Mr Wroe wishes the Council to consider the following proposal:

Regulation J(E)2.

TO:

Number of runners

To qualify for entry in the Kennel Club Stud Book, the number of runners permitted in stakes is:

- a. Open stakes: maximum ~~12~~ **14**, minimum 10.
 - b. Other stakes: maximum ~~12~~, **14** minimum 8.
 - c. Championship - no maximum number
- (Deletions in bold. Insertions struck through)

Rationale

Currently, Regulations J(E)2.a and J(E)2.b specify that HPR field trials should be subject to a maximum of 12 dogs. However, a society approved to host Show Gundog Working Certificates (SGWC) may include up to two additional slots at an ordinary field trial for two SGWC entries. So it is clear that even in the days of the standard HPR water test, up to 14 dogs may be run at an ordinary field trial. Given that the water retrieve, usually at the end of the trialling day, no longer has to be allowed for in the remaining daylight, it should be possible to run up to 14 trialling dogs plus an optional further two dogs pursuing a SGWC. It is

not being suggested that the minimum number of dogs required to be run should be changed, and these shall remain at 8 and 10 for Novice/All Aged and Open respectively.

ITEM 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Midland Gundog Society Mr S Richardson
Examination of game

The Society would like the Council to discuss the wording of Regulation J(A)4.i regarding the examination of game for signs of hard mouth. There is concern that a lot of non-Panel (and also B Panel) judges are not able to feel birds correctly for damage because they are trying to feel across the bird's breast. This may be partly due to inexperience and not being taught correctly, but the J Regulations are poorly worded in this respect in that Regulation J(A)4.i states:

'Place the game on the palm of the hand, breast upwards, head forward, and feel the ribs with fingers and thumb.'

This may be misleading people in that they are trying to feel across the top of the breast. Better wording would point out that they should be feeling the ribs from the bird's back, and that they should be checking the ribcage where it meets the spine, not just feeling the breast of the bird.

- b. Mr D Elliot
Inspecting damaged game
The Council is requested to discuss the addition of wording (shown in bold) to the J Regulation seminar scripts in relation to retrieves, as follows:

4. For all Sub-groups required to retrieve

- i. All game should be examined for signs of hard mouth. A hard-mouthed dog seldom gives visible evidence of hardness. The dog will simply crush in one or both sides of the ribs. Visible inspection and blowing up the feathers on a bird will not disclose the damage, digital examination is imperative.***
Place the game on the palm of the hand, breast upwards, head forward, and feel the ribs with fingers and thumb. They should be round and firm. If they are caved in or flat this may be evidence of hard mouth. Be sure the game reaches the co-Judges for examination. It is sufficient for a pair of judges to examine game which is considered damaged in the presence of the handler and when the handler readily agrees that damage has occurred. Where this is not the case, all judges must be consulted.
Judges should always satisfy themselves that the damage done has been caused by the dog, not by the shot or fall. Judges, for instance,

must be clear about the difference between damage to the ribcage caused by shot and the quite distinctive damage caused by a dog. A sure sign of good mouth is a dog bringing in live game whose head is up and eye bright. Superficial damage, if any, in this case can be ignored. At times, the rump of a strong runner may be gashed and look ugly. Care should be taken here, as it may be the result of a difficult capture or lack of experience in mastering a strong runner by a young dog.

There should be no hesitation or sentiment with hard mouth. The dog must be discarded.

Handlers must be given the opportunity of inspecting the damaged game in the presence of the Judges, but the decision of the Judges is final.

Rationale

As it stands now, the script is not in line with the J regulations and can be easily misconstrued by handlers and up and coming judges.

- c. Mr J Bird Mr D Elliot
Dogs competing on a ground where they have previously won a trial
 Mr Bird wishes the Council to discuss a suggestion that a dog should not be permitted to compete on a ground if it has previously won a trial on that ground qualifying it for preference in the draw for Open Stakes or FTCh status.

Rationale

At present a dog can compete a number of times on the same ground, and may win two novice stakes and two open stakes without being tested on different grounds or quarry. Mr Bird is of the view that this is not a reasonable or sufficient test of a dog. Familiarity will become evident so that handlers of dogs only suited to a single type of ground will enter such trials repeatedly. Dogs should be tested on a variety of grounds with varying quarry and conditions to allow them the opportunity to exhibit a good standard of work on all occasions.

- d. Mr J Bird Mr D Elliot
Running a dog under its breeder
 Mr Bird wishes the Council to consider a suggestion that a judge should not be permitted to judge a dog which he or she has bred.

Rationale

At one time there was a gentleman's agreement in place whereby, to avoid being assumed to have an unfair advantage, a competitor would not run under the breeder of his or her dog, however, this no longer seems to be the case.

The Council is invited to note that for breed showing, the following regulation is in place:

Regulation F(1)8.k: An entry must not be made at any show under a judge of any dog where said judge has bred the dog. This Regulation shall not apply to judges appointed in an emergency.

- e. Mr J Bird Mr D Elliot
Running a dog on ground being provided or hosted by the competitor
 Mr Bird suggests that a regulation should be put into place to prevent a competitor running a dog on ground that he or she is providing/hosting.

Rationale

The rationale is similar to that for item 5.d. above, i.e. that the gentleman's agreement previously in place is no longer applied. The suggestion is made in the interests of ensuring that no competitor has an unfair advantage.

- f. Mr J Bird Mr D Elliot
Use of grounds for HPR field trials
 Mr Bird requests the Council to consider a suggestion that no ground will be used by an HPR Club, society or association for field trials on more than two occasions in any single field trial year.

Rationale

Over 15 trials took place on the same ground in the field trial year 2022/23 and it has become apparent that the variety and hunting requirements needed to fully test the varying types of HPR are not being provided. As a result a sufficient standard of work is not being met for novice, all aged or open dogs. If the same ground is continually used, working the same route under the same conditions, the same type of dog will prevail and not always for the betterment of a good standard of dog work. Whilst it is understood that many shoots are manufactured for game there must be a varying element in grounds and quarry to fully test an HPR.

Note: a proposal on the same issue is included on the agenda under item 4.b.

- g. Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club Mrs M Asbury
Introduction of Certification to cover minimum standards at Kennel Club AV Novice Retriever Working Tests with a view to introducing this as an entry requirement for Kennel Club AV Retriever Novice Field Trials.
 The Council is requested to consider the introduction of a basic level of certification, which could eventually be used as an entry requirement for novice field trials.

Rationale

Many new owners/handlers are introduced to field trials via working tests and may have no previous experience of a shooting day. Currently there is no entry requirement for novice trials that demonstrates that a dog is familiar with, or competent to compete in, this environment.

Many Retrievers enter Novice Retriever Field Trials and get eliminated in the first round having been unable to complete basic tasks. Dogs being eliminated because they cannot perform at a basic level is not conducive to maintaining standards which hosts, gamekeepers and judges expect, and may also reflect on the organising club.

All owners, or their representatives, sign an entry form, confirming they understand the entry requirements and regulations when they do not, or they may not realise what these requirements truly involve.

The club is of the view that introducing a level of certification would create a pathway for educating and supporting novice owners and handlers, and would increase their chances of being competitive at field trial level. Also introducing a level of certification organised by clubs and societies could produce an income stream to support finances.

Presently The Kennel Club already has a Working Gundog Certificate aimed primarily at helping new owners understand the basic requirements of a working dog on dummies or game. It is an assessment of understanding and a demonstration of basic ability, and is not currently used as an entry qualification for events. A possible avenue would be to improve the Working Gundog Certificate to provide this education and introduce levels of certification for attainment, which could be used as an entry requirement for other events.

h. Mr B Smith Mr S McGrath
Competing in novice trials

Mr Smith wishes the Council to consider the provision of a system whereby competitors' dogs are certified to be free from eliminating faults before such dogs are allowed to be entered in novice stakes. This system should be seen as a positive step to assist novice handlers, to ensure that their dogs have reached the minimum level of competency prior to trial entry.

A suggested regulation change (in outline only) is as follows:

Before a dog can be entered into a novice trial, a Certificate from a Competent Person must be obtained by the handler certifying that their dog was tested under shooting conditions, and shown (on the day) not to have any eliminating faults.

A Competent Person for the purposes of this Regulation will be:

- An A Panel Judge, or
- A B Panel Judge, or.
- A Non Panel Judge who has passed the J Regulations examination and has judged at least four trials.

Rationale

Every season competitors enter dogs in novice stakes which commit eliminating faults. Sometimes this is because competitors are unaware as to what is required. However, some competitors are well aware that their dog runs in, or does not sit quietly at a drive, or has a hard mouth but nevertheless they continue to enter their dogs in trials. The effect of this is to deny other competitors from running dogs which are fit to run. Clearly the current notification given by field trial secretaries on entry schedules which is designed to prevent this practice does not have the required effect.

The reasons for the introduction of this suggested new regulation recognises the growth of entries from novice handlers whose understanding of what is required at a trial is limited. Such novice handlers would be able to seek help and guidance from the Competent Person during the process of obtaining the required Certificate and, as a result, be provided with a valuable training opportunity.

It is suggested that this would only apply to persons who have not run in a Novice Trial previously. Obtaining the Certificate should be seen as a useful training pathway before submitting trial entries. A parallel can be drawn with the current practice of 'Drive and Water Certificates' the difference being that the Certificate would be judged in the shooting field not at a field trial keeping administration down to a minimum. It is hoped that the application of such a regulation would improve the quality of dog work at trials and avoid the increasing trend of novice trials being used as a training ground for inexperienced and badly trained dogs.

i. Mr B Smith Mr S McGrath

Elimination of competitors by non Panel judges

Mr Smith requests that the Council consider a suggestion that inexperienced non Panel judges should be prevented from eliminating competitors without prior consultation with the Panel Judge with whom they are paired.

Suggested new guidance (in outline) would be as follows:

Non Panel Judges before eliminating any competitor from a novice stake should first consult with the Panel Judge they are paired with.

Rationale

Mr Smith has witnessed a number of cases where competitors have been wrongly eliminated by inexperienced non Panel Judges. This practice has partially evolved in driven trials because of the increasing tendency on straight lining dogs over long distances. Typically this results in the non Panel judge sending whilst the Panel judge is 120+ yards away identifying birds to retrieve. Often there is no means of communication between them and the non Panel judge is left entirely unsupported.

On one occasion a competitor was put out by the non Panel judge for his dog standing over a bird when it actually had stopped near a small pile of soil. After another four or five competitors had completed retrieves and when the judges eventually got together the mistake was realised. The eliminated competitor was told to put his arm band back on and was given another retrieve even though his first retrieve was without fault.

On another occasion a competitor was eliminated for dubious reasons and, near the end of the trial, having sought permission from the field trial secretary left the trial ground. When the judges got together sometime later and realised the error the competitor was already on his way home. Mr Smith is aware of many similar cases which at best represent bad practice and at worst in the unfair elimination of competitors.

j. Mr N Wroe
Information on HPR judges

Mr Wroe requests the Council to discuss the enhancement of data capture and information-sharing on HPR judges' background being made available to field trial secretaries. Mr Wroe suggests that, as a minimum, the following requirements of certain HPR Panel application forms boxes should be mandatory in order to be admitted to any Panel.

For HPR B Panel these boxes currently on the nomination forms are:

4. Assistance at trials
5. Participation in the administration of clubs/societies
6. Experience of the shooting field

For HPR A Panel these boxes currently on the nomination forms are:

4. Participation in the administration of clubs/societies
5. Assistance at trials

Background

It is apparent that in recent years at least, a number of HPR judges have progressed through the Panels without fulfilling all of the requirements as specified above and which are clearly desirable but ought properly to be considered mandatory. Additionally proposals covered at Item 4.h. above allow for the capture of additional information as to competition success. It is also apparent that in recent years there has been an expressed desire to improve the calibre of judges coming through the system, and the number of appointments required to progress through the panels has been amended, on the assumption that to delay progression of aspirant judges will improve the quality of candidates coming through the panels. However, such a presumption is likely to be defeated by not addressing the competition and experience (as indicated on the panel application forms) background of the A panel judges making the assessment of judging performance of junior judges via the medium of the Judges' Evaluation form. The problem is exacerbated by concessions such as 'grandfathering' to avoid existing panel judges from having to pass the judges' examination.

A crisis in the pipeline of judges coming through the system from non-panel to B and then to A panel has long been brewing. The recent 'Not Currently Active' initiative is likely to shrink the number of A Panel judges which is likely to lead to a concentration of a smaller number of remaining A Panels having a greater determining influence on which breeds progress at trials. Acceleration of the existing body of B panels to A to fill the void will not be possible due to the recently stipulated additional number of trials required to qualify for A panel. Changes to the number of trials new candidates must have judged to progress through the panels have been imposed without reference to the wider views of Council representatives, and with no consideration as to whether existing evaluating judges have met the examination and other desirable criteria (per the form) and whether they possess acceptable competition success history, is unlikely to have improved matters with respect to the pipeline.

Proposed Solution:

1. A comprehensive survey of the background of existing panel judges, taking in the extent of information provided in the nominated boxes discussed above, is long overdue. To include competition success history.
2. Make mandatory for new applications to each panel, the boxes on the application form discussed above. To be compiled into a comprehensive database of judges' background and experience.
3. Survey information on existing panel judges should be made available to field trial secretaries to the extent of their fulfilling the requirements of the form boxes discussed above.
4. Compliance with what is desired to be mandatory requirements as discussed can be encoded as markers on any published list, much as Accredited Breeders achieve accolades which are published as icon graphics.

The Kennel Club Guide for Judges (February 2014) Section (2) states, inter alia, 'There is, therefore, an expectation that Judges will be competent and may be trusted. Judging is not a right but a privilege. Judges should be respected by the competitor'.

It would seem that the privilege granted to senior judges is being taken to be 'a given' and based on 'ideals' rather than mandatory requirements. Show judging competences have undergone a revolution in recent years and it is argued that the time has come to follow suit in the realms of field competition.

To address the imminent sclerosis in the pipeline and for new judges to emerge, one solution would be to accelerate non-panel judges with the requisite number of appointments and which have every newly

mandated box on the application form completed. Similar fast tracking of existing B panels to A panel subject to confirmation of the hoped for mandatory requirements as discussed above will mitigate the imminent crisis.

k. Mr N Wroe
HPR Open field trials

Mr Wroe wishes the Council to discuss requesting the Field Trial Committee to establish a clear and defined route for open field trial status clubs to secure permission to host a second Any Variety HPR Open field trial.

Background

Currently in the HPR trialling world, there are two breeds (German Shorthaired Pointer and Hungarian Vizsla) for which clubs have standing permission to host two open field trials each season. There is another founding breed in HPRs which helped establish HPR field trials in the late 1960s and the early 1970s and this is the Weimaraner.

That clubs within two breeds should retain dual open status has no logical rationale if the privilege is to be denied to other breeds and clubs. It would be clearly illogical and unsupportable that any one or two breeds be granted permanent and unchallengeable preference to be entered into the HPR Championship, so why is it the case that a similar privilege is perpetuated in relation to second open trials. It is not being argued that this privilege be discontinued, simply that it should be afforded to other breeds and clubs and on a rational basis.

The only currently available route that remains for other prominent breeds to seek permission for a second open via a particular society is to apply periodically via the existing mechanism, and it will undoubtedly be the case that other unfavoured breeds would seek to deny any other breed the prestige of a second open if their representatives feel that their own breed would not be so favoured, or which has not geared up to making their own application. There is a degree of complacency with respect to the status quo, which presumes that no external crisis can impact the running of trials, and all is well. But the recent Covid and Avian Influenza pandemics caused several open trials to be lost. Some clubs declined to host their open trials notwithstanding the Kennel Club's Resumption of Trials guidelines. Offers from better organised and committed clubs to take up additional open trials during the crises were not acceded to.

Proposed Solution

1. The Kennel Club's Field Trials Committee should establish a clear route available to any aspiring club to secure routinely, permission for a second open field trial. This by no means should be a route without hurdles. An application would still need to be made and widely

supported, but should certain set hurdles have been overcome, then permission should be reasonably anticipated.

2. What hurdles might be imposed? For example, a club should have achieved and retained single Open status for a minimum of 10 years, and should have, in the 5 seasons prior to application for a second open, successfully hosted 5 open field trials without interruption.
3. The second open application could require that one open trial is run on grouse, and that the other open trial on other quarry, partridge and/or pheasant.

I. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Conducting a Redraw

The Society notes that it has become very noticeable over the last two years that a number of field trials have had to be manually re-drawn, due to technical issues either involving online companies or in some cases manual paper draws. Some issues may be picked up by field trial secretaries early, for example member or non-member tick boxes, lack of qualification information, misunderstanding qualifications and preferences due to rule changes and many more anomalies. New field trial Secretaries may not be aware of regulation changes for preferences that retain prior qualifications before the date of the change concerned, as these only appear in older regulation booklets at the date of the change and are not reproduced in newer ones. Some of these issues have come about by using the online companies, picked up by the field trial secretaries or competitors only after a draw or others who notice the draw must be incorrect, citing various reasons. Field trial secretaries have done what they thought to be a fair redraw, by either just swapping one competitor for another or doing a complete redraw. On occasions even redraws have been picked up as incorrect. Improved guidance is needed.

In order to remove any ambiguity, to ensure that the integrity of field trial secretaries is not called into question, and to provide consistency, the Society wishes to request that a definitive instruction or 'Best Practice' guidance be provided in the field trial regulations, to help with better governance and be fair to competitors as mistakes in the draw can take days to rectify.

It is also suggested that there be a Field Trial Secretaries handbook like that of Show Managers with Codes of Best Practice.

m. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Regulation Booklets and Retrospective Regulations:

It has become apparent that for any new field trial secretaries the regulation booklet is not sufficiently comprehensive. Certain regulations hold a retrospective application (for example permitting a dog which had qualified prior to the rule change to be deemed to be qualified after the change). These are notified at the time of the change, but later editions of the regulations do not include these details, leading to errors. It is

unclear as to how a new field trial secretary would be aware of the changes and the relevant applicable dates.

At present the J Regulation booklet does not produce these retrospective regulations year on year, for example an exemption published in a 2021 booklet has not been published since. The HPR preferences in an open draw were amended with a retrospective preference. When a new field secretary worked from their latest edition of the regulations (2022), this did not appear and therefore was not correctly applied, leading to a challenge and a redraw.

The Booklet is not comprehensive enough and any relevant retrospective rules need to be reproduced year on year.

- n. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
When has a dog completed a run in a trial?

There has been debate at both 'grass roots' and Panel Judge levels as to precisely when is a dog deemed to have finished its run. Is it when the judge asks the handler to pick them up? Or when a dog has returned and is put back on the lead? It appears that there is no agreement on this issue.

The situation may arise that a dog in line for an award commits a fault after the handler has been asked to pick up and this may affect the judges' view. Alternatively on the way back to the handler a dog may do an extra unexpected piece of work, for instance if it comes on a point on a piece of ground not yet covered, that results in a good piece of work which could lead to an award. This can work both ways, either in the dog's favour or against it.

The Council is requested to discuss what approach is deemed to be acceptable.

- o. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society Mrs C Carpenter
Incident Books

The Society wishes the Council to consider reviewing the wording within the J Regulations in respect of what incidents should be reported in the incident book and sent to the Kennel Club, and when.

Regulation J4.h. *Incident Book* states that a copy of the Kennel Club Incident Book, containing details of any incidents occurring at the trial, must be submitted to the Kennel Club within 14 days.

However, the Society notes that time scales for other reporting varies, and that Regulation J10.(d) states that:

'A dog may be removed from the trial if it is:

(d) Of such temperament or is so much out of control as to be a danger to the safety of any person or other animal.'

However, this regulation does not refer to any report having to be made or any time scale, yet obviously is an incident.

Other relevant Regulations are:

Regulation J11. states that 'an objection must be lodged directly with the Kennel Club within seven days after the last day of the trial'

Regulation J13. states that 'in the case of fraudulent or discreditable conduct, the organising society must immediately report in writing to the Secretary of the Kennel Club'

The Council is requested to consider whether a list of different reportable incident regulations should be embedded within Regulation J4.h. to make it easier for field trial secretaries when an incident occurs. It is also invited to discuss whether wording and time requirements should be consistent.

- p. Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Retriever and Spaniel Society Mr S Capstick
Standing over game

The Council is requested to consider what constitutes 'standing over game'. There seems to be confusion amongst some judges as what constitutes standing over game. It does not appear to be an eliminating fault or a major fault as set out within the J Regulations.

Traditionally it was understood that standing over game occurs when a dog is sent for a retrieve, gets to the bird and stands there waiting for an instruction to pick the game, rather than getting on with the job of picking.

A potential scenario is as follows:

- **Example Dog A**

Dog A is sent to pick game from a given area, when the dog arrives in the area with style and pace, the handler blows the stop whistle, the dog stops smartly upon command from the handler and inclines his head gently and looks down at the floor then back at the handler awaiting instruction, the handler asks the dog to hunt, the dog simply bends down and picks up the bird from his feet and returns smartly to the handler. It was purely coincidental that the handler blew the stop whistle right over the bird, the dog was obedient and honoured the whistle.

Some judges will eliminate this dog from the trial with the reason given that it has stood over game.

- **Example Dog B**

Dog B is sent for a retrieve to an area, the handler asks the dog to stop, the dog totally ignores the handler and carries on forward to pick the bird that is in front of him, he returns to his handler, and is credited with a retrieve.

In the above examples, it would be necessary to consider whether each of the above dogs is worthy of being credited to stay in the trial, and whether by eliminating Dog A, but not Dog B, a well-trained and obedient dog has been penalised over a dog which ignored the handler by continuing to pick the game after being asked to stop.

In order for clarity for judges and to ensure a fair and level playing field, further guidance is sought as to what constitutes standing over game.

ITEM 6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council is invited to note that the next meeting will take place in May 2024. The exact date will be confirmed in due course.

ITEM 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THIS WILL BE TAKEN AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Please give at least three weeks' advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required.

NOTES:

1. The Kennel Club will reimburse standard rail fares to all representatives attending the meeting, from their addresses as recorded at The Kennel Club. Claim forms will be available at the meeting.
2. Those resident in Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply in advance for authority to substitute shuttle air travel for standard rail fare, although it is requested that tickets are booked well in advance to take advantage of any reduction in fares.
3. Please give advance notice of matters to be raised under Any Other Business. This assists the Office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Council Chairman.
4. Kennel Club Liaison Council Regulations state that The Kennel Club will bear the cost of all reasonable and externally incurred costs connected with a Council, if agreed in advance. Therefore, representatives should apply to The Kennel Club for approval of any costs they may wish to claim prior to the expense being incurred.

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*

