

**MINUTES OF THE WORKING TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL 2018 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM,
THE KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT

Mrs F Ball	Iceni Dog Training Club
Mr E Carpenter	Essex Working Trials Society
Miss J Carruthers	North East Counties Working Trials Society
Mr B Gilbert	ASPADS Working Trials Society
Mr N Hines	Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog & All Breeds Training Society
Mrs J Holt	North West Working Trials Society
Mrs J Howells	Hampshire Working Trials Society
Mr M Lewindon	Surrey Dog Training Society
Mrs L Marlow	Southern Alsatian Training Society
Mr G Martin	East Anglian Working Trials Training Society
Mr R Musgrave	Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Mrs L Priestley	Bloodhound Club
Mr B Riste	Wessex Working Trials Club
Mr B Russell	Scottish Kennel Club
Mr G Talbot	Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
Mrs S Tannert	British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Mr J Wykes	Leamington Dog Training Club

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss R Mansfield	Officer - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team

IN THE CHAIR

MR B GILBERT

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Miss R Cahill, Mr D Robertson, and Mrs V Thomson.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2017 were approved.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of recommendations

3. It was noted that following recommendations made by the Council, the Board approved the following amendments to I Regulations at its meeting on 11 July 2017:

Regulation I2. Welfare of Dogs

TO:

An exhibitor (or competitor) whose dog is entered at a Kennel Club licensed event should take all reasonable steps to ensure the needs of their dog(s) are met, and should not knowingly put their dogs' health and welfare at risk by any action, default, omission or otherwise. A breach of this Regulation may be referred to the Board for disciplinary action under Kennel Club Rules and Regulations. **The use of pinch collars, electronic shock collars, or prong collars, is not permitted at any Working Trials event licensed by the Kennel Club. This shall apply at the venue or within the precincts of the Trial.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2018)

Note: The Council also noted that similar amendments were also approved in relation to canicross, obedience, agility, heelwork to music, and rally.

The Board had also approved the following new Regulation:

B25 Kennel Club registered dogs at Licensed Events

The use of electronic shock collars is not permitted at any event licensed by the Kennel Club; this includes all competitions, ie show classes, field trials, gundog working tests, obedience, working trials, agility, flyball, heelwork to music, rally and canicross races. This must apply at the venue, ground or within the precincts of the such venue or ground.

The above Regulation came into effect immediately.

Regulation I(C)1. Description of exercises & guidance for judges

TO:

Method of Handling.

Although implicit obedience to all orders is necessary, dogs and handlers must operate in as free and natural a manner as possible; persistent barking, whining, etc. in any exercise other than location of articles, person or speak on command should be penalised. ~~Food must not be given to the dog by the handler whilst being tested.~~ **The handler must not have food or a toy on their person whilst the dog is being tested.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2018)

Regulation I(C)15

TO:

15. Search and Escort.—The “protected steward” will be searched by the handler with the dog off the lead at the sit, stand or down. The Judge will assess whether the dog is well placed tactically and ready to defend if called to do so. The handler will be told to escort the “protected steward” at least 27.432m (30 yds) in a given direction, he will give at least one turn on the direction of the Judge. During the exercise the “protected steward” will turn and attempt to overpower the handler. The dog may defend spontaneously or on command and must release the “protected steward” at once, ~~both where he stands still and when the handler calls him off.~~

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2018)

Proposal for a new Regulation I(C)18

4. The Council noted that the Activities Committee had considered its recommendation for a new Regulation relating to the use of covert sleeves, bite jackets and bite suits. However, the Committee had noted advice, based on legal precedent, which indicated that should the Kennel Club direct/prescribe the use or non-use of a particular measure for health and safety and there was a subsequent injury because of the use, or non-use, of that safety measure, the Kennel Club may attract a liability. Accordingly the Committee did not recommend the new Regulation for approval.
5. The Council discussed a further issue in respect of bite suits. A suggestion was made that a Regulation be introduced to state that dogs must bite on the right arm. At present, it appeared that some judges were of the view that if a steward was wearing a bite suit, it was acceptable for the dog to bite anywhere, which may lead to issues in cases where a steward was wearing a sleeve on the right arm, should the dog be accustomed to biting elsewhere.
6. It was emphasised that both the society and the judge had a responsibility to ensure the safety of stewards and should ensure that all concerned were given adequate briefings to ensure that stewards were safe. However there was some concern within the Council regarding potential legal liabilities should a steward be injured during the course of a trial, and it was suggested that under such circumstances questions may be raised as to why a bite suit had not been used, and whether the steward had been adequately protected.
7. It was agreed that a suitable proposal may be considered by the Council at its next meeting.

Research project

8. The Council was invited to note that, following its request for research based on comparisons of dogs jumping a 5 foot scale versus a 6 foot scale; and an 8 foot long jump versus a 9 foot long jump, a formal proposal was being formulated by Dr Boyd, Dr Doyle, and Mr Gilbert, and would in due course be submitted to the Dog Health Group for

approval. However, due to funding issues, the project would not proceed during the current year although it was hoped it may go ahead in 2019.

Raising awareness about the availability of training for working trials

9. At its previous meeting the Council raised a concern that it appeared that new owners of registered dogs were receiving only minimal information regarding Working Trials, with the discipline not being referred to at all in a list of activities published within the booklet issued to such people.
10. The Council was advised by the office that the matter was in hand and that the publication was in the process of being updated.

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

11. It was highlighted that a seminar for Agility judges, and the Agility Judges Regulations and Judging Procedure examination, were now available online via the Kennel Club Academy. Agility judges were required to pass the online examination prior to attending a practical seminar. Those successfully passing the examination were able to print off a certificate confirming that they had done so.
12. It was intended that in due course a similar process for judges of Working Trials and Bloodhound Trials would be in place. The Council noted that since its last meeting on 26 April 2017, the Sub-Group had discussed content to be placed on the Kennel Club Academy in relation to Working Trials, and that a script for a 'Rules and Regulations' presentation was currently being reviewed.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

Research project

13. This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting under item 3.c. (paragraph 8 refers)

ITEM 6. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Yorkshire Working Trials Society

Proposal to amend Regulation I(C)4

14. Mr Musgrave presented the proposal on behalf of the Society, which wished to propose an amendment to the above Regulation, with the intention of encouraging new competitors into Working Trials. The proposal was seconded by Mr Lewindon.
15. The Society was of the view that new competitors may be daunted by the requirements of competing in CD stakes, and that it would be helpful for the down stay to be reduced to 5 minutes, in line with the stay time in the Introductory Stake, in order to provide a slightly easier entry level into the discipline. It was anticipated that this would provide encouragement for new competitors.

16. It was highlighted that this measure would provide for graduated progression through the stakes as was the case for other exercises. Further, research into stay times in Obedience had provided evidence that most dogs which broke their stays did so within the first five minutes, or on return, which indicated that the second half of a 10 minute down stay did not provide an effective test of the dog's abilities.
17. However, there was also some concern as to whether reducing the stay time by 5 minutes would have any effect in providing encouragement to competitors. It was noted that the Introductory stake had been introduced in order to achieve the same objective but had not proved effective in doing so.
18. After discussion, the Council voted on the proposal, and by a majority, **recommended** it for approval, as follows.

Regulation I(C)4.:

TO

Down (Introductory Stake **and CD 5 Minutes**. Other Stakes 10 Minutes).
(Insertion in bold)

19. A consequential amendment to Regulation I9.a. was also **recommended** for approval, as follows:

Regulation 19.a.

TO:

9. Schedule of Exercises and Points.

a. **INTRODUCTORY AND COMPANION DOG (CD) STAKE**

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
6. Down (Introductory Stake 5 Minutes; CD Stake 40 5 Minutes) (Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)	10	50	35

Yorkshire Working Trials Society

Proposal to amend Regulation I(C)12.c.

20. The Society, represented by Mr Musgrave, wished to propose an amendment to Regulation I(C)12.c. which was intended to provide guidance to judges regarding the number of legs which may be used in each stake.
21. It was highlighted that the existing description and guidelines clearly stated that there should be a progression through the stakes to the highest level. However, this was not always the case, as on some occasions, track patterns in the lower stakes had a higher level of difficulty than the higher ones.

22. Accordingly, the Society was of the view that it would be helpful for the Regulation to specify limits on what may be included in any given stake, in order to avoid undue complexity, and to ensure that track-layers were not discouraged by overly complex tracks. It was also anticipated that stating a maximum length for a track would reduce the amount of land required, which would assist the increasing number of clubs which found it difficult to locate adequate grounds.
 23. The proposal was seconded by Miss Carruthers.
 24. It was suggested that should it be agreed to impose a maximum number of legs, and a maximum length, for each level, it would also be necessary to set minimums, in order to ensure graduated levels of difficulty throughout the stakes.
 25. The Council accepted that the majority of judges set acceptable tracks, and that it was up to societies to refrain from issuing invitations to those setting tracks of undue complexity. Further, societies were free to set their own limits should they wish to do so, although it was suggested that the experience of individual judges should be taken into account, as a well-crafted track, even with a high number of legs, should not be unduly problematic for track layers or for competitors.
 26. An amended proposal was made under the terms of which the provision for a maximum number of legs, and a maximum length, would not be applicable to TD and PD stakes as it was suggested that judges in these stakes should have freedom to set tracks as they wished. The amended proposal was seconded by Mr Martin.
 27. On discussion, it was noted however that in some cases, undue complexity in TD and PD stakes had proved to be a discouragement to track layers.
 28. It was emphasised that all track patterns should be referred to the Trial Manager beforehand and he or she may bring any areas of concern to the attention of the judge for discussion prior to the trial taking place. This may include issues relating to excessive distances, or number of legs. It was also suggested that the issue may be addressed by means of an amendment to published guidance for judges, although it was accepted that this may be of limited effect.
 29. After careful consideration of both the original and the amended proposals, the Council voted on both, and by a majority, neither was recommended for approval.
- Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Proposal to amend Regulation I(C)12.c.
30. The Council went on to consider an alternative proposal which had been submitted by Yorkshire Working Trials Society for consideration should its previous proposal not be supported. The proposed amendment to

Regulation I(C)12.c , which was seconded by Miss Carruthers, was intended to clarify the lengths of tracks in Working Trials by means of removing the word 'approximately' which was considered to be open to interpretation, as a result of which some judges had set tracks of excessive length, and replacing it with 'up to' 0.8046km (half a mile).

31. It was accepted that where possible, judges should be permitted a degree of flexibility in order to set an interesting and challenging track, but that this should not result in tracks being of excessive length.
32. As in the earlier discussion, it was suggested that the issue may be best dealt with by means of Trial Managers checking track plans beforehand, taking into account the time of year, ground conditions, etc.
33. After careful consideration, the Council concluded that no change to the existing Regulation was necessary, and, by a majority, did not recommend the proposal for approval.

Yorkshire Working Trials Society

Proposal for new Regulation I29 and amendment to Regulation I(C)2

34. Mr Musgrave, on behalf of the Society, requested the Council to consider the introduction of a new Regulation in the interests of ensuring the health and safety of competing dogs.
35. The Society was of the view that dogs should be identifiable at all times, and that although most trials were on farm land there may be public rights of way anywhere on that land making it a requirement that dogs were identifiable. Further, it was easier for a steward, judge or handler to control a dog wearing a collar, if it became necessary to do so during a trial.
36. It also wished to emphasise its view that slip chains may be used as harsh training aids and used for negative reinforcement, which it did not consider desirable. Such equipment was already banned in other disciplines under the jurisdiction of the Kennel Club.
37. The proposal was seconded by Mr Lewindon.
38. It was stated that there was an exemption within existing legislation for sporting dogs which were not required to wear identification. However, the Council was in agreement with the principle of the proposal, accepting that some handlers would prefer their dogs to wear a collar, with identification, at all times. There was some discussion as to the precise wording to be used, as it was agreed that there should be absolute clarity as to what would be permitted, and an amended proposal was submitted by Mr Musgrave, and seconded by Mr Gilbert.
39. By a majority, the following amendment to Regulation I29 was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I29. Insert new Regulation i.

One close fitting leather or webbing collar is permitted, providing the only attachment is a form of identification. Dogs must not wear any type of slip or half-slip collar when under test.

(Insertion in bold)

40. A consequential amendment to Regulation I(C)2 was also considered. It was agreed that slip leads should not be permitted as they in effect acted as a second collar which, under the terms of the proposed new Regulation I29.i. would not be permissible.
41. Accordingly the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I(C)2

TO:

2. Heelwork. - ... Where required the lead should be ~~of a slip type or attached to a smooth~~ **close fitting leather or webbing** collar ~~or slip chain~~. Retractable leads or head collars are not to be used.

(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through.)

North East Counties Working Trials Society

Proposal to amend Regulation I(A)9

42. The Society, represented by Miss Carruthers, noted that it was custom and practice to award a point for a dog that has scaled and stayed steady on the other side, even if it did not hold the previously nominated position. It was of the view that if the dog stayed steady on the other side of the scale it should be awarded one point. Accordingly it wished to propose that the 2 marks available should be split and allocated as follows: 1 for the dog staying steady and 1 for the previously nominated position.
43. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Tannert.
44. The Council was of the view that a dog which successfully cleared the obstacle should be awarded some marks. However, there was some concern that the proposal did not fully address the issue of a dog receiving zero marks where it had failed to achieve the nominated position, although it was unclear as to how many judges would award zero marks under such circumstances.
45. However, it accepted the principle of the proposal, which was to formalise existing custom and practice, and after a vote, by a majority, **recommended** the following Regulation amendment for approval:

Regulation I(A)9. Schedule of Exercises and Points

TO:

a. INTRODUCTORY AND COMPANION DOG (CD) STAKE
Group II Agility

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
9. Scale (3) Stay (2) (1) Position (1) Recall (5)	10	20	14

b. UTILITY DOG (UD) STAKE
Group II Agility

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
8. Scale (3) Stay (2) (1) Position (1) Recall (5)	10	20	14

c. WORKING DOG (WD) STAKE
Group II Agility

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
8. Scale (3) Stay (2) (1) Position (1) Recall (5)	10	20	14

d. TRACKING DOG (TD) STAKE
Group II Agility

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
8. Scale (3) Stay (2) (1) Position (1) Recall (5)	10	20	14

e. PATROL DOG (PD) STAKE
Group II Agility

	Maximum Marks	Group Total	Minimum Group Qualifying Mark
8. Scale (3) Stay (2) (1) Position (1) Recall (5)	10	20	14

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

46. It was suggested that it may be desirable to consider the position in respect of all three jumps and the way in which marks were awarded, in order to ensure that a dog which achieved the jump was awarded some marks for doing so, even if it did not adopt the nominated position. The Council did not consider that it was appropriate for a dog having achieved a jump to be awarded a zero mark. It was agreed that a suitable amendment to Regulation I(C) 10.f. may be considered at a future meeting.

ITEM 7. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO REGULATION P4.H

47. The Council noted that the Activities Committee did not support the proposal, originally submitted by the Obedience Liaison Council, to provide a facility for proxy votes for representatives unable to attend a meeting.
48. Accordingly, the Council did not discuss the matter.

ITEM 8. KENNEL CLUB WORKING TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Kennel Club Working Trials Championships 2019

49. The Council noted with regret that Mr G Martin had withdrawn from his appointment to judge the TD Stake at the above event, for medical reasons. It was advised that Ms J Owens-Poole, who had originally been appointed to judge the stake in 2020 had been appointed as a replacement.
50. Mr L Newman had been appointed to judge the TD Stake in 2020 to replace Ms Owens-Poole. It was clarified that where it was necessary to replace a judge, the office would issue an invitation to the judge who had been placed next in the list of votes by societies, and that a further vote was not required.

Hosts for 2022 Kennel Club Working Trial Championships

51. The Council was requested to note that no applications to host the above event had been received.

Ballot for judges for the 2021 Kennel Club Working Trial Championships

52. A ballot was conducted to determine the Council's nomination of judges for the 2021 Kennel Club Working Trials Championships.

Judges

53. The Council noted that the following judges were in place for future Working Trial Championships:

2018

TD – Mr R Musgrave

PD – Miss T Park

2019

TD – Ms J Owens-Poole

PD – Ms L Cottier

2020

TD – Mr L Newman

PD – Mr S Ford

Nomination process for judges

54. At its meeting in April 2018, the Activities Committee requested that the Council review the nomination process of judges for the Kennel Club Championships, to ensure that it was robust and effective, and made the best use of available judges.
55. Under the current process, judges for the Championships were nominated by the Council and were selected following a ballot of representatives on the Council, subject to recommendation of approval by the Activities Committee, and the Board.
56. The Committee wished to recommend that judges at the Championship:
 - Must not have judged the same stake at the Championship within the previous five years
 - Must not have not judged the other stake at the Championship within the previous three years
57. The above criteria would be in addition to the current existing criteria which were as follows:
 - The Judge has agreed to be nominated
 - The Judge is currently actively involved in the relevant stake
 - The Judge is physically capable of undertaking the appointment
 - The Judge must have previously judged a Championship TD or PD Stake as appropriate
 - The Judge must have attended the relevant Working Trial judges' seminar.
 - The TD Judge must not have judged the Working Trial Championships within a period of 5 years
58. The Council did not support the Committee's recommendation that a judge must not have not judged the other stake at the Championship within the previous three years, as it was of the view that the two stakes were not connected and should be treated separately.
59. It went on to consider the Committee's recommendation that a judge must not have judged the same stake at the Championship within the previous five years. It was noted that a proviso was already in place that a judge may not judge a TD Stake at the Championships if he or she had already done so within the previous 5 years, but the Committee's recommendation would extend this to cover PD as well.
60. A discussion took place as to whether there was an adequate number of judges for PD Stakes to support the recommendation. There were mixed views on the issue, with some being of the view that the number of existing judges was sufficient and was being augmented on an ongoing basis as new judges became qualified, whilst others highlighted the

issues faced by some clubs in appointing judges for PD Stakes at Championship level.

61. However, it was acknowledged that a good level of experience was required to judge at the Kennel Club Championships, and that some newer judges would not be capable of fulfilling such an appointment until such time as they acquired more experience.
62. There was also a range of views as to whether imposing a 5-year gap between PD appointments at the Kennel Club Championships would ensure a greater variety of judges, or whether it would prove unduly restrictive.
63. After due discussion, the Council was requested to vote on the issue in order to provide a definitive decision regarding the recommendations submitted by the Committee. By a majority, the Council agreed that no changes should be made to the existing nomination process.
64. It went on to consider a further suggestion from the Activities Committee, under the terms of which nominating societies must have held a championship trial for that particular stake during the previous year (nominations would be permitted from societies which held PD and TD stakes in alternate years). Representatives would only be permitted to vote for the stake that their society held in the previous year (or the preceding year in case of the societies that alternated stakes on an annual basis.)
65. The Council was of the view that excluding those societies which did not hold championship trials for a stake from nominating judges for that stake would not be a positive step, as many such societies had a great deal of experience and expertise and were well placed to make appropriate nominations.
66. It also agreed that there would be no advantage to restricting votes in any one stake to representatives of those societies which had held that stake in the previous year. It concluded that all societies involved in running championship trials should be entitled to take part in the nomination process, and should be permitted to vote, and accordingly, by a majority, the Council did not support the Committee's suggestion.

Date of Kennel Club Working Trial Championship

67. The Council had been requested to consider the possibility of changing the traditional date on which the Championship takes place, due to the clash with the Kennel Club's Discover Dogs event. However, discussion on this issue was no longer required.

ITEM 9. WELSH KENNEL CLUB

68. The Council noted that the Welsh Kennel Club had decided that it would no longer be running a Championship Working Trial, its last one having

been run in 2017. The Club's representative, Miss R Cahill, would no longer attend Council meetings.

69. The decision had been made for a number of reasons, including a lack of competitors and helpers. Further, the Club had experienced the withdrawal of support from local farmers and it had proved impossible to locate alternative grounds.

ITEM 10. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

70. The Council noted the Five Year Strategy document.
71. A concern was raised that the strategy for the discipline had not been developed or progressed for some time. It was highlighted that it was the responsibility of the Council to do so, and any suggestions for ways in which to implement or develop the strategy should be submitted for consideration at future meetings.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Eligibility Criteria for Working Trials

72. The Council was requested by the Activities Committee to consider a suggestion that Regulation I(A)6. be amended to reduce the eligibility criteria for Championship TD and PD Stakes in view of the decreasing number of entries in Championship trials. It was hoped that reducing the eligibility criteria may be instrumental in encouraging new competitors into the discipline as it would assist dogs to progress through the stakes.
73. The Council acknowledged that it was highly desirable to encourage new competitors into the discipline but it was not of the view that reducing the eligibility criteria for Championship stakes would be effective in doing so.
74. It was also concerned that reducing the eligibility criteria would lead to a reduction in the standard of dogs competing in Championship TD and PD Stakes which was not a desirable step. It was also of the view that reducing the criteria may not give handlers and dogs adequate experience before progressing into competing in such stakes, which may prove discouraging for them.
75. A vote took place, and, by a majority, the suggestion was not supported by the Council.

Proposed review of Regulations for Bloodhound Trials relating to entries/qualifications

76. The Activities Committee also requested that the Council discuss a proposed review of I(D) Regulations relating to Bloodhound Trials in order to address the issue of higher stakes becoming 'top heavy' as a result of reduced entries at trials.

77. Under the terms of the proposal, the use of the nomination system would be reinstated, in order to encourage numbers competing at lower levels.
78. Bloodhounds may be nominated in the stake immediately above that for which they were entered, if they had previously gained a second prize in the stake for which they were entered in the trial. Hounds having gained a second prize in the stake for which they were nominated would become eligible to enter that stake at future trials.
79. There would be no nomination from the Intermediate stake to the Senior Stake. In order to preserve the quality of hounds competing at that level, only the winner would be eligible to go from the Intermediate Stake to the Senior Stake.
80. The Council raised no objection to the proposed review, and it was agreed that discussions between the two societies concerned would take place, with a view to a formal proposal being submitted to the Council at its next meeting.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

81. It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed in September 2018.
82. In the intervening period, elections for the next term of office would take place, and the results would be announced in due course. Current members were thanked for their work on behalf of the Council.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm

MR B GILBERT
Chairman

THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

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