

MEETING OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2026 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, ROYAL
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET

A G E N D A

- ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM OF COUNCIL
- ITEM 2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM OF COUNCIL
- ITEM 3. TO ELECT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE FOR THE VARIOUS SUB GROUPS EFFECTIVE FROM JULY 2026

The Council is requested to elect two council representatives per sub-group to sit on the Field Trials Committee. The sub-group represented by the Chair will require only one additional representative, as the Chair of the Council is automatically a member of the Field Trials Committee.

- ITEM 4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- ITEM 5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 01 MAY 2025

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

- ITEM 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS)

The Council is invited to note the Results of Recommendations document.
(Annex B refers)

- ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

- a. Yorkshire Gundog Club

Drive Certificates – Regulation K2.c.(3)

Miss S Whyte

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to Regulation K2.c.(3) to remove the requirement for a Drive Certificate as part of the qualification for a Retriever to be awarded the title of Field Trial Champion.

Regulation K2.c.(3)

TO:

(3) Proviso for all Retrievers Before any Retriever is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have a Water and Drive certificate. The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water

test. The special water test must have been conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at one of the following: the Retriever Championship, a Field Trial Open Stake, or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.) ~~The Drive Certificate must be conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at the Retriever Championship or a Field Trial Open Stake.~~

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

As agreed at the previous meeting, this proposal follows the Council's request to formally review the continued requirement of the Drive Certificate. The original purpose of the Drive Certificate was to demonstrate a dog's ability to remain steady at a driven shoot. However, judges awarding 1st place in an Open Stake, whether walked-up or driven, and contributing towards a Field Trial Champion title, are already satisfied that the dog has demonstrated the required standard across all aspects of work, including steadiness, game-finding, and control, through assessment of overall performance across varied shooting scenarios. In contrast, the Water Certificate continues to serve a clear and distinct purpose, ensuring a dog will enter water freely and swim, an element unlikely to be consistently tested at field trials. The Drive Certificate therefore appears increasingly outdated and creates additional administrative and logistical burden for judges, secretaries, and competitors.

- b. The Cheshire North Wales and Shropshire Spaniel and Retriever Society
Mr S Capstick
Drive Certificates at Novice Driven Trials – Regulation K2.c.(3)

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to regulation K2.c.(3) to allow drive certificates to be awarded at novice driven trials to alleviate the pressure on judges at Open trials.

Regulation K2.c.(3)

TO:

(3) Proviso for all Retrievers Before any Retriever is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have a Water and Drive

Certificate. The Water Certificate must have been conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at one of the following: the Retriever Championship, a Field Trial Open Stake, or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.) The Drive Certificate must be conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at the Retriever Championship or ~~a Field Trial Open Stake~~ **at a Novice Driven trial where a dog has been awarded 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th.**

(Insertion in Bold. Deletion struck through)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

This proposal is relating to the awarding of Drive certificates, dogs that are in the awards i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th placed at a novice driven trial could be given a drive certificate if one is requested and the dog has attained the required standard.

Rationale

It would take pressure off judges and secretaries at open trials when they may get a request for numerous drive certificates at the end of a trial, even if the dog hasn't completed the trial. Drive certificates are harder to obtain than water certificates, especially in the north of the country as there are less open driven trials and therefore opportunities to obtain drive certificates in opens. Dogs who win or are placed in a novice driven trial have shown that they meet the required criteria when sat at a drive. There would always be two panel judges present and by restricting the certificate to dogs only in the awards it prevents people asking for one when they may never use it as part of the qualification to becoming a champion.

c. Hunt Point Retrieve Field Trials Association

Mr S Kimberley

Water Tests at HPR Trials - Regulation J(E)1

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to regulation J(E)1 regarding the return of a Water Test at HPR Field Trials.

Regulation J(E)1

1. Basic requirements.

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 **from land and water.**

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

In Open, All Aged and Novice Stakes to receive an award dogs must complete a water test at the end of the trial (If this is not possible due to conditions a water certificate may be issued to be completed within three weeks of the trial under 2 judges one

of which should be an A panel) consisting of a marked retrieve of a Dummy from water of at least 10 to 15 metres completed on command and delivered to hand.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

The HPRFTA would like to propose a change of regulation on behalf of its members regarding the return of a Water Test at HPR Field Trials. Since the water test was removed from HPR trials it has been concluded that the dogs in the HPR group are not being fully tested at trials and that only dogs who have won 2 Open Stakes are required to do a water test to gain their title of FTCh. This leaves many dogs who have gained other awards that have not been fully tested and therefore this could have an impact going forward in breeding programmes for the future of this group. The heritage of the HPR breed of dogs was to develop an all purpose hunter, pointer retriever gundog that could operate on land and water. Under the current regulations this isn't being fulfilled. The HPRFTA recently conducted a survey whereby 195 people completed the survey, 122 of those were handlers, 37 Panel Judges and 19 field trial secretaries. 68% of those that took part were not satisfied with the current regulation.

d. East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club

Mrs J Reed

Judges' evaluations on all judges - Regulation J(A)3.n

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to Regulation J(A)3.n to allow all judges to provide feedback on all those they judge alongside.

The Council is invited to note that this had previously been a discussion item at its 2025 meeting, where it was agreed that a proposal would be considered at its 2026 meeting.

Regulation J(A)3.n

TO:

Judges on the A Panel and the B Panel must submit assessments of B Panel or non-panel judges, as appropriate. **B Panel and non-panel judges shall, in addition, submit a brief evaluation of the A Panel judge(s)** with whom they officiate. All evaluation forms to be received by the Royal Kennel Club within 30 days of the trial.

(Insertion in Bold. Deletion struck through)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

A shorter report for B panel and NP judges on the A and B panel would be completed, with questions such as “was this senior judge mentoring and helpful, did they treat you fairly, did they listen to your reasoning and help you understand any difference of opinion etc”. This would help in the panel process if a junior judge is dissatisfied with the conduct of a senior judge. 360 reporting is commonplace in the business world now and would be beneficial in evaluating all judges.

e. Utility Gundog Society

Mrs J Reed

Field Trial Champion Qualifications (Retrievers) - Regulation K2.c(2)(c)

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to Regulation K2.c(2)(c) to include dogs placed second in one 24-dog and one One-day Open stake under three different Panel A judges be given the title of Field Trial Champion.

Regulation K2.C(2)(c)

TO:

(2) Retrievers

(c) A dog which gains a first **or second** award in one 24-dog and one One-day Open stake under three different Panel A judges.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

It appears that the IGL classifies a 2nd in a two day as equivalent to a win in a one day (B qualifications). Further the RKC recognise this with regard to advancement to the A panel of Field Trial judges. So therefore, a FTCh would be the next option.

f. Utility Gundog Society

Mrs J Reed

Championship Qualifications - Regulation K2.c.(2)

The Council is requested to consider the following proposal which would include that a second place at the Retriever Championships would go towards the dogs FTCh title.

Regulation K2.c.(2)(a)

TO:

(2) Retrievers

(a) A dog placed first **or second** in the Retriever Championship.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

The proposed amendment seeks to recognise the merit of a second place award at the Retriever Championship as counting towards a dog's FTCh title. The Retriever Championship represents the highest level of competition, where the standard of work required to be placed is exceptional. A dog achieving second place has demonstrated a level of ability, consistency, and performance comparable to that required for first place and significantly above that seen in other qualifying stakes.

2. Mrs J Reed

GWT Novice Definition - Regulation J(G)2.b.(2)

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to Regulation J(G)2.b.(2) to remove the certificate of merit from the Novice Gundog Working Test entry restrictions.

Regulation J(G)2.b.(2)

TO :

NOVICE. Confined to dogs which have not gained an award ~~or certificate of merit~~ at a field trial, been placed first, second or third in an Open GWT or first in a Novice GWT held in accordance with Royal Kennel Club Rules and Field Trial Regulations.

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

Going from novice to open GWTs is a very big step and doing so too early could have a detrimental effect of their training. Winning a CoM in a trial is often just because the dog has completed its run, and these dogs may need further experience at more trials.

g. Mrs J Reed

Welfare of dogs - Regulation J2

The Council is requested to consider an amendment to regulation J2 to include choke chains.

Regulation J2

TO:

2. Welfare of dogs. A competitor whose dog is entered at a Royal 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 Royal Kennel Club Rules and Regulations. The use of pinch collars, **choke chains**, electronic shock collars, or prong collars, is not permitted at any field trial licensed by the Royal Kennel Club. This shall apply at the venue or within the precincts of the trial.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

It is of the opinion that these have been used as a way of disciplining a dog and have been heard to be “rattled” in a pocket as a correction for heelwork at least and when removed dogs have been seen to show signs of apprehension. They are unnecessary and outdated in modern training.

h. Mrs J Reed

J regulation Seminars – Addition of Regulation J5.c.(7)

The Council is requested to consider the addition of Regulation J5.(7) to ensure that only Royal Kennel Club affiliated Clubs and Societies are able to run the Royal Kennel Club Judges’ Training Programme seminar on Royal Kennel Club J Regulations.

Regulation J5.c.(7)

TO:

Only Royal Kennel Club registered clubs and societies are allowed to run the Royal Kennel Club Judges’ Training Programme seminar on Royal Kennel Club J Regulations.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rationale

It has been suggested that seminars have recently been run by individuals who have also offered newly appointed NP judges an opportunity to judge at a non RKC test. There are concerns regarding the potential impact this would have on the judging of field trials.

i. Mrs C Carpenter

Amendment to Regulations J4.c.(1)(viii), J6.(a)(ii) and J6.(c)

The Council is requested to consider amendments to the above regulations and addition of J6.(a)(ii) to ensure that the requirements relating to the closing dates for entries are located in the appropriate sections of the J regulations, providing greater clarity for secretaries.

Regulation J4.c.(1)(viii)

TO:

(viii) The latest date for receiving applications for entry **must be a minimum of 14 days prior to the stake.**

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Regulation J6.(a)(ii)

a. (ii) Societies may determine the closing dates of entries and nominations, but must be a minimum of 14 days prior to the stake.

(Insertion in Bold)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Regulation J6.(c)

TO:

c. A society may make its own arrangements as regards the pre-payment of entries and, except where otherwise defined in the Regulations, conditions of stakes. ~~Dates of closing of entries or nominations must be a minimum of 14 days prior to the stake.~~

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective from 2 February 2027)

Rational

The proposal seeks to clarify the placement of the requirement relating to closing dates for entries. The current wording in Regulation J6(c) does not logically relate to the provision regarding payment arrangements and would be more appropriately positioned within the section dealing directly with entries.

The addition of Regulation J6(a)(ii) ensures that the requirement for closing dates to be a minimum of 14 days prior to the stake remains clearly stated within the entries process.

The corresponding amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(viii) provides consistency and will assist secretaries, particularly those new to the role, by ensuring schedules clearly state the correct closing dates. This is particularly relevant as schedules are no longer routinely submitted to the RKC for ratification prior to publication unless requested.

ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. The Cheshire North Wales and Shropshire Spaniel and Retriever society

Mr S Capstick

Reducing the length of two day Open Retriever stakes

The Council is requested to discuss whether a two day open retriever trial could be finished in one day under certain circumstances.

Rationale

This item has been queried due to the recent three day Any Variety Spaniel (Except Spaniel [Cocker]) Championship finishing at 11am on the second day. Circumstances which may trigger this include losing a lot of dogs quickly on the first day and the prospect of weather disruption on the second day or lack of game. There are naturally negative issues to consider which include items such as accommodation judges may have

already paid for, guns & club officials may try to finish early to save money. Guns are often asked to shoot at a trial and the second day may only be a handful of birds but the guns still need to pay for two days of shooting, at some trials the end of the trial means the end of shooting, the guns will be less likely to offer to shoot at two day trials in the future. If the trial is reduced to one day does that still count as an A-qualification or as a B-Qualification? There will be many questions and answers for various scenarios, but the club feels it is an item that ought to be discussed further.

The Council is invited to note that this matter was discussed at the Field Trials Committee's February meeting and the Committee had agreed to defer the item, and consider further following the Liaison Councils discussion

- b. The Cheshire North Wales and Shropshire Spaniel and Retriever society
Mr S Capstick
Judges judging together more than twice a season

The Council is requested to discuss whether a limit should be introduced whereby no two panel judges may judge together as a pair more than twice in one season.

Rationale

Certain judges who judge together a lot may have a different perspective than others and thus weight the result in favour of their style of handling and the type of dog they like. Spreading the judge's expertise may even such problems out and give a more balanced result at the end of the trial.

There are potential problems, of course, such as the clubs having difficulty in getting good judges and clubs quite rightly ask couples to judge together in order to save money. Also, judges may prefer to judge with their friends and people whose company they like to be in. The club feels that this is an item that warrants discussion.

- c. Utility Gundog Society

Mrs J Reed

Correct procedure in a run off at a driven trial

The Council is requested to discuss whether the Royal Kennel Club needs to publish advice regarding procedure in a run off at a driven trial.

Rationale

It has been observed that, on occasion, both panel judges move forward to observe dogs working, leaving Non Panel, often inexperienced, alone to send dogs. This has at times resulted in procedural errors or the incorrect elimination of dogs. It is therefore recommended that one panel judge remains with the Non Panels and dogs.

d. East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club

Mrs J Reed

Talking to your dog or touching your dog

The Council is requested to discuss whether the Royal Kennel Club needs to publish advice regarding talking to your dog or touching your dog during a trial.

Rationale

It has recently been reported that competitors have been zeroed in Working Tests or eliminated or warned in Field Trials for briefly praising their dog, for example by saying “good dog” or giving a single pat. If events are intended to reflect a realistic shoot day, it would seem reasonable that such minimal praise, given after a task has been completed successfully, should be considered acceptable.

e. East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club

Mrs J Reed

Toileting during a trial

The Council is requested to discuss whether the Royal Kennel Club needs to publish guidance regarding rules around your dog toileting during a trial.

Rationale

There are so many differences of opinion that a “hard and fast” rule might now be necessary.

f. East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club

Mrs J Reed

Pointing at a bird for the dog to mark

The Council is requested to discuss whether the Royal Kennel Club needs to publish guidance on a competitor “pointing” at a bird for the dog to mark.

Rationale

It is understood that judges should not impose their own training methods on competitors. Therefore, a competitor should not be penalised or eliminated for differences in training approach.

g. Utility Gundog Society

Mrs J Reed

IGL Retriever Championship Qualifications

The Council is requested to discuss whether a dog placed 2nd in the Retriever Championship should receive formal recognition equivalent to a

B qualification. Currently, only the winner is entitled to defend its title the following year, while the 2nd placed dog receives no comparable recognition. In contrast, a 2nd place in a two-day Open Stake is classified as a B qualification.

h. Mrs J Reed

Regulation J(A)3.g

The Council is invited to discuss whether there is a need to provide clearer guidance or expectations around the positioning of dogs at driven trials, particularly in relation to opportunities to retrieve wounded or runner birds during a drive.

Rationale

Many gundog trainers do not have regular opportunity to sit their dogs amongst the guns on a shoot day, which may place some dogs at a disadvantage in this aspect of a driven trial. In contrast, a greater number of handlers are likely to have experience of picking up, where dogs are positioned further back from the guns.

Positioning dogs in a picking-up type position may also provide handlers and judges with a clearer view of the drive, potentially supporting more effective handling of wounded or runner birds. However, this must be considered alongside practical considerations on the day.

i. Mrs J Reed

Regulation J(A)4.e

The Council is invited to discuss whether further clarification or guidance is required in relation to how handlers are directed to the fall area, and how retrieves are assessed when game is not found within that area.

Rationale

It has been observed that judges have, on occasion, picked birds themselves more than 20 yards outside the designated area and subsequently put dogs out. Dogs and handlers should be given every reasonable opportunity to retrieve birds, and consideration should be given to allowing the benefit of the doubt in such cases

ITEM 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THIS WILL BE TAKEN AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

New topics for Any Other Business (AOB) should be submitted at least 7 days before the meeting. Topics will only be considered if they are urgent, unforeseen, and require immediate attention.

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.

<i>THE KENNEL CLUB'S STRATEGIC AIMS</i>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Champion the wellbeing of dogs</i>• <i>Safeguard and enhance the future of pedigree dogs, addressing breed-associated health issues</i>• <i>Protect the future of dog activities together with our grassroots network</i>• <i>Become relevant to more dog owners to increase our impact</i>• <i>Deliver an excellent member experience and widen our community</i>• <i>Ensure we are financially secure and sustainable</i> |
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