MEETING OF THE HEELWORK TO MUSIC LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT 10.30 AM ON MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2026 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

A G E N D A

ITEM 1. **TO CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL TERM JANUARY 2026 TO DECEMBER 2028, FOLLOWING A BALLOT CONDUCTED AT THE HEELWORK TO MUSIC LIAISON COUNCIL INDUCTION SESSION**

ITEM 2. **TO CONFIRM APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL TERM JANUARY 2026 TO DECEMBER 2028, FOLLOWING A BALLOT CONDUCTED AT THE HEELWORK TO MUSIC LIAISON COUNCIL INDUCTION SESSION**

ITEM 3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

ITEM 4. **HEALTH AND WELFARE**

The Council will receive a presentation from Ms F McDonnell (Health & Breeding manager) to discuss health initiatives at the Royal Kennel Club and explain the Health and Breeding Advisory Group.

ITEM 5. **YOUNG KENNEL CLUB & DOG TRAINING**

a. The Council is invited to note a verbal update from Mrs H Lawrence (Head of Education and Dog Training)

b. Following a presentation received by the YKC Team at the September 2025 Activities Committee meeting, the Committee was requested to consider allowing YKC Obedience judges to be able to compete on the same day on which they judge the YKC classes, within agreed parameters.

   The Committee agreed to raise this with the new Liaison Councils to gather views of the community for all disciplines. The Heelwork to Music Liaison Council is requested to work together with the Accredited Trainers to look into the matter for Heelwork to Music and come up with a workable solution. A timescale of 6 months was suggested, in order to form a proposal for the summer Activities Committee meeting.

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ITEM 6. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is invited to note that the Board, at its meeting on 21 October 2025, approved the following amendments to L Regulations from 1 January 2026:

Amendment to regulations L2.a and L5
Regulation L2.a – Application
TO:
The application for a licence to hold a HTM competition must be made to the Secretary of The Royal Kennel Club, at least six ~~weeks~~ **months** before the proposed date of the competition, together with the appropriate licence fee.
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)
(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation L5 – Societies are required to apply for permission to hold Special Events
TO:
Applications should be submitted to The Royal Kennel Club by email at least six ~~weeks~~ **months** before the start of any qualifying heats for the event.
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)
(Effective 1 January 2026)

Amendment to regulations L12.c and L13
Regulation L12.c
TO:
c. For the duration of the competition and including those in the exercise area, all dogs must be on a lead except when competing, **undertaking a practice round, when a lead may be used** or practising prior to competition.
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)
(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation L13
TO:
Practice rounds are permitted at the judges' discretion and the judges' decision is final, provided their main purpose is to aid the dog's or handler's confidence and their experience of the working ring, and subject to the following:

a. Where practise rounds are allowed, they must be available for all competitors in that class and must comply with the division entered.

b. The time taken must not exceed the duration for routines at the relevant level.

c. The use of toys which emit any noise, and the use of food are not permitted.

d. The usual rules and etiquette for those who compete must be followed except that the handler may use as many cues as necessary to aid the dog, **the handler may attach a lead to the dog** and may touch the dog in a non-harmful and non-intimidating manner.

e. Excessive exuberance from the handler or dog will not be permitted if the judge considers that it could interfere with the chances of winning of other dogs and handlers.

(Insertions in bold.)
(Effective 1 January 2026)

ITEM 7. PANELS

The Council is invited to consider the use of panels including identifying which panels may be beneficial moving forward and to discuss the membership of these panels for the duration of the Council term.

ITEM 8. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

a. The Council is invited to note that there is no update from the October meeting of the Activities Judges Sub Group.

b. The Council is invited to note that the process for the mentoring scheme for new Heelwork to Music judges is changing, with applications being submitted to the Royal Kennel Club Judges Team moving forward who will work to match new judges with a suitable mentor.

ITEM 9. JUDGES SURVEY

a. The Council is invited to discuss the findings of the recently conducted Judges Survey, undertaken by the Liaison Council members, which flagged concerns about the number of people qualified to judge who were not being offered judging appointments.

b. The Council is requested to consider an amendment to the Guide for Heelwork to Music Judges which would allow judges to inform competition organisers of their availability to judge until such time as Heelwork to Music judges could be added to the 'Find a Judge' system on the Royal Kennel Club website.

Amendment to Chapter 2. Invitation to Judge
~~The soliciting of judging appointments is not acceptable. Judges usually receive a first invitation after being seen as a successful handler.~~ **Judges may let competition organisers know that they are available to judge at their**

competition. Competition organisers often plan schedules up to 12 months in advance and judges may not request feedback from competition organisers if they are not selected to judge.
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

ITEM 10. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

The Heelwork to Music community are invited to share any ideas which might help to improve or develop Heelwork to Music.

To submit a proposal or discussion item, please use our online form so the Heelwork to Music Liaison Council can discuss and review the suggestion further prior to the next meeting in July. Submissions are accepted at any time of year via the online form: Liaison Council Agenda Item.

ITEM 11. DISCUSSION ITEMS

No discussion items have been received for this meeting.

ITEM 12. STRATEGIC 5 YEAR PLAN

Representatives are invited to develop a new Strategic 5 Year Plan, to align with the needs of Heelwork to Music, and to discuss how ideas may be progressed.

The Strategic 5 year plan will be shared with the community and published with the minutes of the meeting.

ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the Council's next meeting will be on 20 July 2026.

THE ROYAL 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