

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT
10.30 AM ON TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2026 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT

Mr G Armstrong
Mrs A Boulter
Ms D Cox
Mr K Fernandez
Mr J Higgins
Miss L Holmes
Mrs L Holmes
Mrs J O'Connell
Ms C Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Senior Manager - Canine Activities
Miss A Morley	Activities Liaison Manager
Miss T Collins	Obedience & Rally Liaison Advisor

GUESTS

Mrs H Lawrence	Head of Education and Dog Training (Until para 11)
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ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. No apologies for absence were received as all representatives were present.
2. Mr Armstrong, Mr Fernandez, and Mrs O'Connell were welcomed to the meeting as the new members of the Liaison Council.

ITEM 2. YOUNG ROYAL KENNEL CLUB & DOG TRAINING

3. The Liaison Council received a verbal update from Mrs H Lawrence (Head of Education and Dog Training).
4. It was noted that the team were in the process of updating the Code of Best Practice for Dog Training Clubs, which included any registered or listed clubs that offered training according to the Royal Kennel Club's records. It was believed that the updated Code of Best Practice for Dog Training Clubs would be issued towards the end of the summer. The Liaison Council expressed a wish to see an early draft of the Code.
5. The team had been monitoring entries and it was noted that there had been an increase in Special Pre-Beginner heat entries over the last year, which was positive. Although, some areas of the UK achieved more entries than others.

6. It was raised that the Summer Spectacular for the Young Royal Kennel Club (YRKC) had been postponed. Instead, a survey will be issued to the YRKC members to discover what types of events the community wanted, in order to make sure the training days and events offered in future are relevant and scheduled within the diary so that they do not clash with any other Competitive Obedience shows. However, the qualifiers were still going ahead, including the Summer Camp in Scotland.
7. Mrs Lawrence requested a further meeting with the Obedience Liaison Council on behalf of YRKC Team, as they were interested in the Liaison Council's views regarding the future of YRKC Competitive Obedience.
8. The Liaison Council agreed that a meeting would be beneficial to discuss ideas, as it was keen to investigate the different routes people took to begin participating in Competitive Obedience. A survey will be issued to the YRKC members in the summer to gain feedback and understanding regarding what they wanted for YRKC competitions and activities.
9. The Liaison Council agreed that there were elements that Competitive Obedience could learn from the YRKC, Good Citizen Scheme and Special Pre-Beginner Stakes Classes to encourage people to compete with their dogs. It was noted that reviewing the format of classes and the journey into Competitive Obedience would align with the Liaison Council's strategic aims.
10. It was queried as to how the YRKC survey would be promoted and it was confirmed that the surveys would be sent to the YRKC members directly first.
11. Mrs Lawrence was thanked for her time and it was agreed that she would be in contact with the Liaison Council to arrange a further meeting soon.

Mrs Lawrence left the meeting at 10.45am

ITEM 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

12. The Liaison Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2026 as an accurate record.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Liaison Council noted that the Activities Committee, at its meeting on 24 March 2026, approved the following amendments to G Regulations:

Amendment to G8. Application

TO:

The application for a licence to hold an Obedience Show must be made to the Secretary of The Royal Kennel Club at least six months before the proposed date of the show together with the appropriate licence fee. **In the event that a winter show (Between 1 October & 31 March) is unable to apply within that timescale due to venue restrictions, by exception applications will be accepted up to 6 weeks prior to the show.**

(Insertions in bold)

(Effective immediately)

This is provided a number of criteria are met:

- Societies/Clubs will make every effort to apply at least 6 months before the date of the show.
- Where this is not possible for winter shows planned between October & March, Societies/Clubs will contact the Royal Kennel Club six months before the period to inform them that they will be submitting a late application.
- The Societies/Clubs will apply as soon as their venue has confirmed the dates, which must be no later than 6 weeks in advance of the show date.
- The Societies/Clubs will inform the Royal Kennel Club at that time, so that the Regional Support Team are aware of the urgent licence application.

Amendment to the Policy document for winter Obedience shows

TO:

An event cannot be postponed to a later date. Another future date may be booked to replace the cancelled event in consultation with the Royal Kennel Club but must be considered as a separate show/trial. **However, if health and safety reasons dictate, a winter Obedience show (between 1 October and 31 March) may be postponed as long as the rescheduled date is within 6 weeks of the original. The original entries, draw and judges should be used where possible and full refunds will be given to competitors who cannot attend the new date.**

(Insertions in bold)

This is provided a number of criteria are met –

- Show Secretary must check that the new date does not clash with any other show within the area
- Check that the same venue is available and rebook
- Check that the judges are available, and arrange for the same judges (where possible)
- Inform the Royal Kennel Club (RKC) of the new date, so that a new license can be issued.
- Inform all competitors of the change and provide a full refund to any competitor that cannot attend the new date.
- There will be no additional entries taken
- The eligibility will remain as it was for the initial show date.

14. The Liaison Council praised the immediate implementation of the above amendments. It was believed the amendment allowed the problem to be dealt with swiftly, which was welcomed by the community.

ITEM 5. STRATEGIC 5 YEAR PLAN

15. The Liaison Council reviewed the Strategic 5 Year Plan, which had been updated to align with the needs of Competitive Obedience. The plan had been updated to include the new members of the Liaison Council, however the key priorities had remained the same. Four working groups had been established in line with the four strategic priorities. Work had been completed already with the surveys, which were being used to inform the discussions and proposals.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

16. The office provided a verbal update regarding the Sub-Group's meeting held on 7 April 2026.
17. The Liaison Council regretted that there had not been a representative from the Liaison Council at the Sub-Group's meeting. However, membership of the Sub-Group would be reviewed at the July Activities Committee meeting.
18. It was noted that at the time of the meeting, the Royal Kennel Club were welcoming applications for Competitive Obedience Accredited Trainers. After a successful day of interviews, 2 new Accredited Trainers were appointed.
19. The Liaison Council wished to congratulate Dawn Cox and Emma Lavender on their successful applications.
20. It was queried as to whether there would be further recruitment later in the year to appoint more Obedience Accredited Trainers. It was suggested that the Liaison Council could raise the matter with the AJSG, if there was a need for more Obedience Accredited Trainers.
21. It was raised that the Guide for Judges was being updated. The Sub-Group were aware that the Liaison Council had been working on guidance regarding run-offs, which was discussed later under item 9.b. Once the run-off guidance had been clarified, the Guide for Judges could be updated and published accordingly.

ITEM 7. SURVEY RESULTS & REPORTS

Judges Feedback

22. A judges survey had been conducted earlier in the year, Miss Holmes provided a brief summary of the results. The research provided helpful information to assist with the Liaison Council's 5 Year Strategic Plan, specifically to 'develop a program to ensure that there are sufficient competent judges, ring and chief stewards into the future'.
23. The survey investigated the declining number of judges in Competitive Obedience and discovered ways to address issues through suggestions and feedback from the community. The feedback gathered from the survey had gone on to inform and develop further proposals.
24. The survey gained 371 responses, which was impressive and encouraging. Rich and detailed information had been provided, and it showed that the community were interested in engaging and sharing their views through the surveys.
25. Miss Holmes was thanked for her work on the matter.

Championship Qualification

26. Following a request to do so from the Competitive Obedience community, the Liaison Council investigated the difficulties in qualifying for Championship classes. Mrs Boulter provided an outline of the consultation and discussions that took place.
27. A two stage consultation process was undertaken. An initial consultation of seven options was consulted upon. The Liaison Council, in consultation with the community, created a draft proposal based on the option for change most supported in the initial consultation, recommending progression on Places (substituting the win in Open C for either 3 second places or 6 third places).
28. A consultation had been conducted to gather views on the draft proposal, however it was not supported by the majority of the community. Although the consultation process provided valuable quantitative feedback on the matter, there was a lack of support for any alternative suggestion other than achieving a win and three qualifiers. Therefore, the matter would not be progressed any further at the time.
29. Concern was raised that some comments from the community were expressed aggressively. It was noted that the Liaison Council valued all feedback provided, including the expression of differing views from the community. However, it was hoped that future discussions and views could be shared in a constructive and respectful manner to support positive engagement for all involved.

30. Mrs Boulter was thanked for her effort and for managing the discussions.

ITEM 8. INTRODUCTORY CLASS REVIEW AND PROPOSAL

31. In February 2026, a survey was issued which helped the Liaison Council to gain an understanding of the Competitive Obedience community's views on the Introductory Class.
32. The survey requested responses from anyone who had some experience or involvement with the Introductory Class in the past two years, either as a competitor, a judge, or a show organiser, in order to help in a review of the class and consider how it could be improved.
33. It was noted that 98 people responded from a good cross section of competitors, judges and show organisers. Although, the data provided some mixed views, 87% of competitors liked the class, or elements of it, whereas 64% of judges did not enjoy judging the class and only 23% of organisers scheduled the class at their shows.
34. From the results of the survey, it was concluded that the Introductory class met the need for confidence-building and accessibility, particularly for those new to the discipline. However, the community's concerns about its structure, progression value, and practicality were significant.
35. Based on feedback from the obedience community, the Liaison Council investigated a simplification of the exercises and the scoring in the Introductory Class. It was hoped that it would revitalise the class and make it more attractive to competitors, judges and show organisers.
36. It was raised that there had been a visible uptake in competitors entering the Introductory class since the review had begun. This suggested that the consultation process and survey had spread awareness and created more interest in the Introductory class.
37. Ms Williams and Ms Cox were thanked for their time and effort on the review and subsequent proposals.
38. The Liaison Council noted that the proposed wording was included in the consultation with the community. Although, it was raised that a section had been omitted from the recall section of the proposal on the agenda. It was requested for the elements of the proposal in relation to recall to include the following sentence: 'Recall - Off lead or on a long line – handler's choice.'
39. After some discussion, the Liaison Council **recommended** the following amendments to the regulations relating to the content of the Introductory class:

Amendments to Regulation G(A)9(e) Introductory

TO:

9. Introductory.

(e) The detailed test will be:

~~(1) Engagement – this will be marked throughout the test – the use of motivators and rewards before and between exercises which may include food, silent toys, tricks, and verbal and physical praise within the reward area of the ring. Toys and food in a closed container, must either be left on the reward table, or be concealed in the handler's pocket during tests, where only verbal motivation may be used to keep the dog engaged. 10 Points~~

~~(2 1) Heelwork to be set and marked as 2 distinct exercises:-~~

~~2-1a. 'Heelwork set up on lead' and 21b. 'Heelwork on lead'~~

~~a) Heelwork Set Up - on lead, handler to set the dog up in heelwork position, in a designated spot, facing the judge, on steward's command.~~

~~Handler to be asked if they are ready, when this is acknowledged, steward will say 'end of test' 2-5 Points~~

~~b) Heel on lead, from a moving start and detailed in Annex G(C)4 c and d – Tests 8-15 Points~~

~~(3 2) Recall - Off lead or on a long line – handler's choice to be set and marked as 3 distinct exercises:-~~

~~(a) 'Recall Present' – On lead dog sitting in front of the handler, handler takes one step back on steward's command, then calls the dog into the present again on steward's command, the steward will say 'end of test' 2 Points~~

~~(b) 'Recall Finish' – on lead. Dog sitting in front of the handler, on steward's command, handler directs the dog to heel, whilst keeping feet still, the steward will say 'end of test' 2 Points~~

~~(c) 'Recall – on/off a long line – handler's choice'. On command, the handler shall leave the dog in a sit or a down in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog which must return briskly – no present is required, but will not be penalised – once the dog has returned, the steward will say 'end of test' 6 Points~~

At the start of the exercise the dog should be in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) at the handler's left side. On command, the handler shall leave the dog in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When

instructed, the handler will recall the dog which must return briskly to the 'present' position and sit. When instructed, the handler will command the dog to go to the heel position on the handler's left side and sit in the 'heel' position. **10 points**

- (3) **Teamwork.** Overall marks are available for teamwork in terms of:
- When and how verbal praise is used during the exercises and how verbal/physical praise, tricks, food and/or play rewards are used before and between exercises.
 - How the handler supports and encourages their dog to help them cope with the ring experience. **5 Points**

(4) **TOTAL** ~~30~~ **35 Points**

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

40. The Liaison Council **recommended** the following amendments to the Test regulations for the Introductory class:

Amendment to Regulation G(C)4.c. Tests – Heelwork

TO:

c. Heelwork - in all classes at the start and end of the test the dog should be sitting straight at the handler's side except in Introductory, which will be from a moving start **with no halt at the end.**

(Insertions in bold)

Amendment to Regulation G(C)4.d.(1) Tests – Heel on lead

TO:

d. Heel on lead

(1) Introductory Class. ~~Heel on Lead will be broken down into distinct tests, as detailed above,~~ Heelwork from a moving start, to be on lead and will be

either:-

- a) A large 'figure of 8' **8 points**
 - b) Or a large 'S' shape **8 points**
 - c) Or an arc or circle in one direction, break off and reward and the pattern then repeated in the opposite direction ~~4 points plus 4 points~~
 - a) a large circle in both directions **15 points**
 - b) or a U shape along three sides of the ring in both directions **15 points**
- or parts thereof depending on the size of the ring (e.g. for a large ring just an arc in both directions or two straight sides of the ring).

Judging will only begin at a marked point so the handler may start with a sit at heel before the marker or do a moving start.

The change of direction in either pattern can be a small arc rather than an about turn.

If the U shape is used, handlers do not need to do formal turns in each of the corners, but they may work the turns if they wish but they will not be marked.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

Amendment to Regulation G(C)4.f.(2) Tests – Heel on lead

TO:

f. Recall

~~(2) Introductory Class — will be divided into three parts — 4.f.(1)a. Present, 4.f.(1)b. Finish and 4.f.(1)c. Recall, and will each be tested separately.~~

a) 'Present' — on lead dog sitting in front of the handler, handler takes one step back on steward's command, then calls the dog into the present on steward's command, the steward will say 'end of test' 2 points

b) 'Finish' — on lead dog sitting in front of the handler, on steward's command, handler directs the dog to heel and finish in a sit, whilst keeping feet still. The steward will say 'end of test' 2 points

c) 'Recall' On/o Off lead or on a long line — handler's choice. At the start of the exercise the dog should be in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) at the handler's left side on or off a long line (handler's choice). On command, the handler shall leave the dog in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog, which must return briskly to the handler. A present is not required, but will not be penalised. The steward will say 'end of test' 6 points

(2) Introductory Class - Recall - Off lead or on a long line – handler's choice. At the start of the exercise the dog should be in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) at the handler's left side. On command, the handler shall leave the dog in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog which must return briskly to the 'present' position and sit. When instructed, the handler will command the dog to go to the heel position on the handler's left side and sit in the 'heel' position.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

(Effective 1 January 2027)

41. The Liaison Council considered the following amendments to G(C)1.f, in relation to the timetable of judging. It was agreed that as the proposal reduced the number of exercises in the Introductory Class, it would require less time to judge the class.

42. Therefore, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Amendment to Regulation G(C)1.f(7) - Timetable of Judging

TO:

f. Timetable of judging - to assist the show executive the following guide timetable is issued:

(7) Introductory Class ~~40~~ **12** dogs per hour
(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)
(Effective 1 January 2027)

43. It was highlighted that as there were many changes being recommended for the Introductory Class, it would need to be communicated effectively.
44. It was suggested that a video could be developed by the Liaison Council to assist competitors, judges and stewards. Videos had been well received before and it was agreed that it would be helpful to assist different learning styles in the community.
45. It was queried whether a video, to aid communication and understanding, would be able to be published on the Royal Kennel Club website. It was suggested that the Liaison Council could create a YouTube channel, from which the Royal Kennel Club could link to for additional guidance.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS

Competing and Officiating on the Same Day

46. The Liaison Council considered a proposal to allow judges and stewards to compete and officiate on the same day. Miss Holmes provided some background to the proposal, as it was one of the main issues that had been raised from the judges survey.
47. As raised under Item 6 above, in February 2026 the Liaison Council conducted a survey to better understand judging participation, challenges, and potential solutions. From the survey, it was identified that one of the barriers to judging was that some judges missed an opportunity to compete.
48. It was noted that the proposal also aligned with a request from the YRKC to allow judges of YRKC Obedience classes to compete on the same day. Overall, the aim was to increase judge availability and support shows more effectively.
49. After consulting with the community, the proposal to suspend the regulations for a trial period was considered for both YRKC judges and stewards as well as judges and stewards for standard Competitive Obedience classes.
50. It was noted that there were concerns from the community, which were raised during the consultation period. Therefore, the suggestion of a suspension instead of a formal regulation change had been proposed. As it was a significant change to the G regulations, it was suggested that a trial suspension for regulations G30.g and G33.d could be implemented until December 2027 instead.

51. It was raised that if a trial suspension could be recommended as soon as possible, it would enable data collection to begin over the remaining 2026 show season to assess the uptake, effectiveness and practicality of the proposal.
52. It was agreed that the data from the suspension period would be reviewed at the Liaison Council's summer meeting in 2027, to assess whether the proposal was effectively addressing the barrier for judges. If the data proved that the trial was successful, then the proposal would be recommended as a regulation from January 2028.
53. It was raised that there had been some queries in the community as to whether the proposed suspension to regulations G30.g and G33.d would be optional. However, the Liaison Council was in agreement that to ensure a fair trial across all shows, the suspension would not be optional. Therefore, allowing the Liaison Council to research the impact of the suspension appropriately and factor in any issues into the review in 2027.
54. It was reiterated that the decline and lack of judges was a major issue for Competitive Obedience. The Liaison Council wished to remind the community that the suspension would only be temporary and did not disregard their views. As part of the consultation, the change needed to be trialled to analyse its effectiveness and to see if it provided a solution to a large problem.
55. It was noted that the recent concerns had been raised via a private Facebook page. The Liaison Council welcomes all opinions, as long as they were presented directly to the Liaison Council in a collaborative way through the formal consultation mechanisms.
56. After some discussion, the Liaison Council was in agreement and **recommended** the suspension of the following regulations:

Suspension of Regulation G33.d – Judges and Judging

Judges at Competitive Obedience shows must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their sole ownership, or handle a dog, at the show at which they are judging. A dog recorded in part ownership with the judge may be entered for competition in any part of a class other than the part which the judge is judging.

Suspension of Regulation G30.g – Management

Judges should, whenever possible, provide their own caller stewards, but the show management shall provide any caller stewards if necessary. Caller and scribe stewards used by judges at the show must not work a dog on the same day, with the exception that a caller and scribe stewards may compete in one class, other than the class in which they are officiating, provided that the class in which they are officiating has 25 entries or less. Caller and scribe stewards

taking up this option will be exempt from any running order and may compete at a convenient time agreed by the judges concerned.

57. The Liaison Council **recommended** that Regulation G30.g be suspended in part, with the exception of the first and last sentences. The section which states that 'Judges should, whenever possible, provide their own caller stewards, but the show management shall provide any caller stewards if necessary', would remain in place. In addition, the section which states that 'A dog recorded in sole or part ownership with the judge may be entered for competition in any part of a class other than the part which the judge is judging.', would remain in place.
58. The Liaison Council also discussed the guidelines that should be implemented with the regulations suspensions. It was agreed that, with the exception of those officiating in a Championship C class, judges and stewards at Competitive Obedience shows could compete in one class with one dog at the show at which they were officiating (except Championship C). Provided that the class they were officiating took priority, the judge and steward(s) would all compete at the same time and, if relevant, the scent exercise would not be disrupted. Before judging commenced, the judge was required to advise competitors of the time they would be leaving their ring and the time judging would recommence, and they were required to adhere to those times. The ring in which they were due to compete was also required to be notified of the times.
59. It was confirmed that the recommendations would be fast tracked to the July Activities Committee meeting, with the hope of it being effective immediately, which would allow time to start gathering data on the impact during the end of the summer show season.
60. It was agreed that, if approved by the Activities Committee, communication would be required to provide clear guidance alongside the suspension to outline the expectations of judges and stewards.

Run Offs

61. Following a request from the community, due to multiple interpretations of the regulations relating to run offs, the Liaison Council wished to clarify that handlers had the choice of whether to complete the run off. It was raised that there could be many reasons why someone could not compete in the run off and the majority view believed that the handler should not be penalised for it.
62. The Liaison Council consulted with the community from 13 March to 19 April 2026 and received 273 responses. From which, 75% agreed with the proposal in principle. The only comments received were regarding the wording about judge's discretion, which had been amended accordingly.

63. The Liaison Council agreed that the proposal effectively addressed that in the event that a handler declined the run-off, or if only one person turned up to the run-off, then the absent competitor would have forfeited the higher place and would be awarded the lower place. If both competitors declined the run-off, then the judge would decide the order of placings.
64. Therefore, the following addition to the regulations was **recommended**:

Amendment to Regulation G33.i

TO:

In the event of dogs obtaining equality of marks, 'Run Offs' to decide the winning dogs will be judged one at a time by completing one or more of the tests for that class as set out in Annex A.

Handlers who present themselves for a run off will take the higher place(s). Those who decline or do not present themselves for a runoff, will not forfeit their place, but accept the lower place(s) in the order decided at the discretion of the judge.

(Insertions in bold)

65. It was raised that the matter regarding run offs had been suggested from the online submission form on the Royal Kennel Club website. If the community had further ideas that they wished the Liaison Council to consider, suggestions could be submitted via the online form: [Liaison Council Agenda Item](#).

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Concerns Over Number of Judges

66. The Liaison Council had been investigating ways to address the decreasing number of judges and discussed how to encourage people to become Competitive Obedience judges.
67. Concerns were raised that 30% of judges in the survey intended to retire in the next 2-3 years and only a small number of people displayed an interest in becoming a judge. The Liaison Council wanted to find ways to ensure the uptake of judging and support judges through their ongoing professional development.
68. From the data gathered, it was raised that 65 people had won out of Beginners and would be able to start their journey into judging. However, they had expressed that they did not want to judge at the time for various reasons. It was felt that there had been untapped potential there to try to encourage those competitors to start judging.

69. It was noted that the cost of attending seminars could be a barrier, especially if they also needed to travel far to attend. Attendance at the seminars had been low throughout 2025.
70. It was suggested that reasonable adjustments could be made to ensure people could carry on judging for longer. The Liaison Council considered what reasonable adjustments may look like. It was briefly discussed whether a judge of the lower classes could judge certain exercises while sitting down, or if the judge could sit out of the ring whilst the competitor completed a training round, for example.
71. It was also suggested that the details of the Accredited Trainers should be easier to access on the Royal Kennel Club website, so that people were aware of who to contact for support.
72. It was queried whether the design and practice of judging seminar could be moved online instead of in person. Therefore, allowing more people to attend without costs. Other routes into judging such as mentoring and apprenticeships were also briefly discussed.
73. It was agreed that the Liaison Council would set up a Working Group with the Accredited Trainers to investigate the possible options and solutions going forward. The Accredited Trainers had agreed to the Working Group, which would meet over the next few months, to trial new approaches with an end date in mind of March 2027 for final recommendations.

Promoting Competitive Obedience at Crufts

74. The Liaison Council agreed that Crufts was the ideal event to promote Competitive Obedience to the general public and encourage people to the discipline. It was highlighted that the matter would support the Engagement section of the Liaison Council's 5 Year Strategic Plan.
75. Although, it was felt that there were multiple ways that the public could be exposed to Competitive Obedience at Crufts, the Liaison Council felt that each display or competition became standalone events with no consistency of presentation, messaging and delivery.
76. The Liaison Council wanted to ensure the activity was showcased as being fun, accessible and appealing for all ages and abilities.
77. It was suggested that a meeting could be arranged with all those involved in promoting Competitive Obedience at Crufts, to see what resources they may need in order to provide guidance and advice about how to get involved. It was hoped that it could then provide a coordinated approach for engagement.
78. Areas to consider included the Dog Activities Stand, the Obedience ring, the Dog Training ring and YRKC ring. Although those areas displayed different

levels of Competitive Obedience, from have a go events at the Dog Activities Stand to Championship classes in the Obedience ring, all were vital ways to spread awareness and information to the public.

79. It was suggested that the commentators could also be asked to inform the public where to find more information or view more Competitive Obedience displays or competitions.
80. It was noted that the Liaison Council had made a Facebook post prior to Crufts 2026 to inform people of all the Competitive Obedience displays and competitions, which had been well received.
81. From previous experience with the Good Citizen Dog Scheme ring, it was raised that they used to do displays which demonstrated that the public didn't need equipment to start training and they used all varieties of breeds. It was felt that this had always been successful with the public.
82. The 'Have a Go' events on the Dog Activities Stand had been well received by the public in recent years. It was agreed that it was a great direct, personal and positive experience for the public to have a go with a trained dog. The sessions had been run on a trial basis and it was noted that more structure may be required as these developed further. It was suggested the organiser of the display should be included in the meeting in order to discuss how to facilitate the Have a Go events better.
83. Beginner Guides for the Activities were also available on the Royal Kennel Club website. It was agreed that the Competitive Obedience Beginner Guide would be circulated to the Liaison Council to review and modernise, where required.
84. The Liaison Council discussed the Information Stand at the Obedience ring. It was noted that historically the stand had been supported by the Liaison Council with Mrs Lavender kindly organising it. It was agreed that, as part of the above review, Mrs Lavender would be consulted to explore how to work together to support the promotion of competitive obedience.
85. Mrs Boulter, Ms Williams, Ms Cox, Mr Armstrong, and Mrs O'Connell volunteered to take part in the meetings to discuss the matter going forward.
86. It was queried whether the Liaison Council could also meet with the Royal Kennel Club Revenue and Brand Team to work on how to market Competitive Obedience to the public and develop more representation for Activities on social media. The office agreed to arrange a meeting alongside the above Crufts discussion.
87. It was felt that some marketing opportunities had been missed which would have appealed to the public. For example, a YRKC member had recently

gone on to compete in the Championship C class. The office urged the Liaison Council to get in contact if it felt there was an important or inspiring story that would be good to share on the Royal Kennel Club Media Centre.

Online Seminars for New Competitors

88. One of the identified actions within the Strategic objectives was to develop an engagement plan for new competitors to make Competitive Obedience training more easily available.
89. Since the Covid pandemic, online seminars had become a more accessible way to reach a wider audience. The Liaison Council considered the feasibility of staging an online seminar, for new and aspiring handlers. It was suggested to trial the seminars and it was hoped that it could be used to promote Competitive Obedience, reach a wider audience, and support newcomers who were starting out on their Competitive Obedience journey.
90. It was noted that similar Obedience seminars had been conducted in America and had been very well received. It included subjects such as ways to bridge the gap between training and competing, ring entrances, set ups and moving from one exercise to the next, the value of training rounds, and handling the competitor's nerves.
91. It was in agreement that it would be a good way to support new competitors and promote the discipline and that it was a proactive way to encourage people.
92. It was suggested that the online seminar sessions could be recorded, which enabled those who were interested, but were not available to attend, to view the session after the live event.
93. It was queried as to how the seminars would work with the Royal Kennel Club. It was confirmed that the Royal Kennel Club ran show management seminars and health webinars. Interested parties would need to book in through the Royal Kennel Club website and footage would need to be approved in advance.
94. Although, it was suggested that the Liaison Council could advertise the seminars through its Facebook page, with the Royal Kennel Club's support, which may be a quicker way to achieve and deliver the seminar.
95. Mr Fernandez, Mrs Boulter, and Ms Williams volunteered to be involved in developing the seminar. The aim was for it to be delivered in the Autumn as a trial.
96. It was raised that it would need to be publicised well to reach the target audience and to be arranged so that it did not clash with Competitive Obedience show dates. It was noted that Obedience Plaza could help the

Liaison Council to target their marketing, as well as contacting training clubs or behaviourists to share the event with their members.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chief Steward Guidance

97. An issue was raised about the training available for Chief Stewards. It was felt that more support and guidance was needed to improve the knowledge and confidence of the Chief Stewards.
98. It was confirmed that the Activities Judges Sub-Group and the Accredited Trainers would usually run the Chief Steward seminar. The matter would be raised with the Accredited Trainers at the Working Group meeting.

Congratulations

99. The Liaison Council wished to formally thank the newly appointed Inter-Regional Obedience Team Managers and the new Obedience Accredited Trainers. All the individuals were congratulated on their new roles.

Show Schedule Availability

100. A query was raised about the availability of Competitive Obedience Show schedules for new competitors. It was noted that there appeared to be no way to access a schedule online without paying for it, which might be a barrier for new people interested in competing.
101. There was a Facebook page which shared most schedules , however new competitors might not be aware of it.
102. It was agreed that a discussion could be had to find out if there was a way around the issue.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

103. The date of the Liaison Council's next meeting would be confirmed by September 2026.

The meeting ended at 1.18pm

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