



**THE KENNEL CLUB**  
*Making a difference for dogs*

# **NEWS RELEASE**

---

## **KENNEL CLUB STATEMENT ON THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG**

The Kennel Club has been working closely with the German Shepherd Dog clubs over a significant number of years in an attempt to address issues surrounding the breed. However, it appears that the various initiatives designed to improve matters have had very little effect and this in turn is serving to damage the reputation of dog breeders, not just in this breed but across all breeds.

Matters came to a head at Crufts this year where the exhibition of GSDs once again came under intense scrutiny, which merely served to reinforce the Kennel Club's concerns for the breed's future. As a result of this, a review group was established to examine the issues surrounding the GSD.

In particular, the culture of double-handling widely practised and condoned at breed club shows was felt to be having a detrimental effect on the temperament of dogs which often show symptoms of enormous stress while being exhibited and at other times. Erratic movement and apparently exaggerated conformation were other concerns which the review group looked at.

In attempting to address the worsening in the breed's reputation, the General Committee, guided by the review group, initially considered de-registering the breed and/or removing its CC status. Both these measures would have had the effect of driving breeders outside the influence of the Kennel Club, doubtless causing a further decline in the breed, and eventually implementation was decided against.

Another measure, making it compulsory for breed club championship shows to be held in conjunction with group and general championship shows, was also discussed but has not been implemented at this stage due to the huge changes in infrastructure which would be necessary.

In June of this year, the Kennel Club issued a press release in which it stated that the General Committee had expressed concern over the current situation which it would not allow to deteriorate further. Included in this announcement was a list of stringent measures the General Committee was considering in relation to the breed.

These measures have now been discussed and as a result the General Committee makes the following directives:

- The GSD Breed Standard is to be changed as of 1 August 2016 to include additional wording to emphasise the importance of the dogs being capable of standing comfortably and calmly, freely and unsupported in any way.
- Each judge of GSDs must understand their role which includes proper control of the ring and adherence to Kennel Club regulations at all times. Judges who ignore the Breed Standard and/or allow double-handling will risk having future CC appointments rejected.
- All championship show judging contracts for 2018 and beyond are suspended with immediate effect until such time as each judge has attended a Kennel Club judges' education seminar. The Kennel Club is to establish a programme of these seminars throughout the UK for championship show judges and expects that all judges of the breed will adhere to the points made, which will emphasise that the breed is to be exhibited in the same manner as all other large pastoral breeds.
- Kennel Club representatives will be appointed as soon as possible to attend all championship shows where CCs are on offer for the breed. They will work with the show societies and judges to curtail double-handling and will have executive authority to put into effect the previously agreed escalation procedure for double-handling if the show societies and/or judges do not do so. Shows which allow double-handling will risk having their future CC status rejected.
- There is to be a review of the Category Three Breed veterinary check guidelines for the GSD breed to ensure that health and welfare concerns continue to be addressed.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said: "The Kennel Club was given no option but to address the issues which the breed itself seemed to be taking far too long to address and which came to a head at Crufts this year.

"The health and welfare of dogs is the primary objective of the Kennel Club and, where a breed experiences any issues in this respect, the Kennel Club has an obligation to take action where it can. The time for that action is now.

"This situation simply cannot continue as not only is the health and welfare of the breed at risk but this is having a detrimental effect on the reputation of all breeders, pedigree dogs, dog showing and the Kennel Club.

"The implementation of these measures involves a considerable financial commitment on behalf of the Kennel Club, which demonstrates the level of investment that has been made to protect the future of this breed."

**ENDS**

[254.16]

27<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Notes to editors**

Change to GSD Breed Standard (please see Annex A attached).

Training seminars for judges of the GSD breed (please see Annex B attached).

Double handing escalation procedure (please see Annex C attached).

## Annex A

### **Change to GSD Breed Standard**

The GSD Breed Standard is to be changed as of 1 August 2016 to include the following addition (underlined): “Characteristics: Versatile working dog, balanced and free from exaggeration. Must be capable of standing comfortably and calmly, freely and unsupported in any way, in structural balance, whilst both rear pasterns are vertical. Attentive, alert, resilient and tireless with keen scenting ability.”

## **Annex B**

### **Training seminars for judges of the GSD breed**

The Kennel Club is to establish a programme of seminars for championship show judges of GSDs which will have the following content:

#### **Presentation of dogs in the show ring (at breed, group and BIS level):**

1. Dogs must be exhibited in as natural a manner as possible without any exaggeration or manipulation to deceive.
2. Judges must examine dogs in accordance with Kennel Club custom and practice.
3. Judges must ask handlers to move dogs 'out and back' in order that front and rear assemblies can be assessed properly. GSDs are to be moved individually in this fashion, never in pairs or groups.
4. Judges must ask exhibitors to move their dog around the ring in accordance with Kennel Club custom and practice. There is to be no fast running or use of extended leads. Movement must be on a loose lead and at a walk or trot.
5. Judges must select placed dogs in accordance with how all other large pastoral breeds are judged. There are to be no 'run offs' between dogs with handlers running fast.

#### **Ring procedure**

1. Dogs must be exhibited on a loose lead only.
2. Dogs must be exhibited free-standing. No stacking of dogs allowed.
3. Judges must not tolerate double-handling and must enforce the escalation procedure if warnings are ignored.
4. Dogs exhibiting clear signs of stress are to be dismissed from the ring by the judge if the handler is not prepared to withdraw their dog.

## **Annex C**

### **Double handing escalation procedure**

Regulation F (1) 17 h The attracting of the attention of exhibits by any method from outside the ring is prohibited. It is the duty of the Judge, steward or Show Management noticing such attraction to ask that it cease.

Regulation F (1) 30 (13) A dog may be disqualified from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not if proved to have been attracted from outside the ring whilst being judged.

To help societies police these Regulations, exhibitors, judges and show organisers should also be aware that the Kennel Club has agreed a form of escalation procedure to allow for enforcement of these provisions. The procedure is in three stages:

1. Request: If attraction is observed, firstly the judge and/or then a senior officer of the society will make a polite request for the activity to desist.
2. Warn: If the conduct is extreme, or continuing, and/or is causing disruption, then a senior officer of the society may enter the ring and suspend the class until it stops.
3. Suspend: If the attraction restarts then the exhibitors may be warned that if it continues, and a further request has to be made, then the class will be abandoned.

Where a person attracting the attention of dogs from outside the ring is an exhibitor/competitor or joint owner and is readily identified, he/she should be reported to the Kennel Club for a breach of Regulation F(1) 17h.