

Hello Everyone

The trainers spent a lovely Sunday morning on Zoom discussing future training as restrictions are gradually being lifted.

The concerns of the trainers and their current situations were discussed, and we have various trainers shielding, some self-shielding and others coping with the pressures of returning to work. Given this we hope members understand that we do not, at present, have the resources to provide training, however we want to give you an update on the plans, so you can start to get yourselves and your dogs ready for your return in a "Covid-19 secure" environment.

Further Government guidance on shielding is due out next week and currently the Government has not given clear guidance on when group dog training sessions can begin. The trainers are meeting again in a fortnight's time to look at the next stages and hopefully have a more defined plan.

However, in the meantime, there are things we need you to start doing in order for us to be able to train in a safe environment for everyone. Please be assured, we are not doing any of this for the fun of it, and the guidelines will need to be adhered to by all for the safety of everyone attending the club and all those they come into contact with. I'm afraid we will have to ask people to leave if we feel they are not sticking to the guidelines.

So, what can you do? Firstly, the trainers and other club members may be wearing face coverings or even visors. Now whilst it would be difficult for you to desensitise your dogs to visors, you can start to get them used to face coverings. They may need to deal with this more and more in everyday life.

- Take this slowly and if your dog shows any signs of fear or any other uncomfortable reaction, go back one or two steps. Avoid prolonged eye contact while building this up.
- Get something you could use to cover your face and put it near your face while your dog is looking, give them a treat.
- Move the covering near to your chin and give them a treat.
- Cover your mouth and give them a treat.
- Cover your nose and give them a treat.
- Talk to them with the cover on and give them a treat
- You get the picture.....

Also get your dogs used to the smell of hand sanitiser! It can really affect some dogs.



Start to consider what you need to bring to training. Due to safety, there will be no equipment for general use out on the field and the trainers will not be providing anything like spare leads etc. So start to look at what you need to bring. If you are in Puppy or First Steps, there will be no equipment on the floor to get noses working, so can you bring your own snuffle mats or anything else you know works for your dog.

In the higher classes, trainers will not be able to provide additional activities using send away markers for example, or spare toys for retrieve, so can you bring your own?

Trainers will not be able to give you spare treats, so do you have enough?

Get that kit bag sorted with everything you need, including water, ready to be self-sufficient.

You will need to bring everything you need for yourself, including face coverings, hand sanitiser, and (don't laugh) loo paper. If you get caught short, there are no toilets open on the park 😊 (You don't want to know where the trainer's discussion went on that topic!)

Prepare for a different look on the field. We have another meeting at the end of this month to discuss class logistics more fully, but we will have to adhere to social distancing so you may see poles everywhere indicating where to stand. We may be in different parts of the field. There is a lot to consider! One of the major concerns that came out of the meeting was that we train in a park that is open to the public, who are no longer used to us being there. We need to make sure everyone is safe and all things, including use of the enclosed field are being discussed, but it does make it harder than training on a private ground, such as a football pitch for example, with no public access.

We are looking at registering in advance. We will have to know how many people want to attend as we need to keep numbers restricted. Some clubs are only running one to one training at the moment, so if we are looking at small groups, we need to make sure we can manage it. If you have not registered, we're afraid you will be turned away.

You have responsibilities to the trainers and other club members. Please do not attend if you or one of your household / bubble are feeling unwell or showing any symptoms of COVID-19. Please follow Government Guidance regarding self-isolation, seeking testing etc.

We have responsibilities towards you. Please do not feel pressured to attend if you are finding things a bit difficult at the time, as the 'current saying goes, "it's ok to not be ok". We have club members and a trainer, who are keyworkers. If you have

any concerns regarding this please ask questions and raise any issues, which we will try to address. Your health and that of your family is the most important thing.

Very often we do not receive any response to emails, but this time it is different, we need your input and regular confirmation of attendance and changing circumstances.

Progress tests and Thursday night training sessions are suspended for now.

And finally, please don't be offended if we don't fuss your dogs like we used to, it's going to be hard for all of us, but at the moment it is something we cannot do.

Please make sure you are following Government guidance about what you can and can't do personally and then our guidance on the field, which may be a bit stronger than the Government's with regard to social distancing etc.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

The Trainers.