



**THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
OF THE CAT FANCY**
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THE LICENSING OF ANIMAL EXHIBITS

Dear Animal Welfare Committee Members

It has been brought to the attention of the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF) by concerned exhibitors that the Welsh Government is currently consulting on new Regulations regarding Animal Exhibits which include a proposal that anyone exhibiting (showing) a dog or cat (or other pet species) in Wales will need to be licensed and inspected. It is understood that the welfare of animals is the prime purpose of this legislation, but those who exhibit cats are pet owners enjoying a hobby in their own time and for no gain. It would seem both impractical and unnecessary to require them to obtain a licence even if showing on a more regular basis rather than the once or twice a year as is currently proposed.

The Cats

All of the pedigree cats at our shows are registered with our organisation and comply with breeding policies that include best practice for health and welfare. They are judged according to a Standard of Points for each breed and this is supported by a list of Veterinary Defects applicable to all. It is not our intention to encourage extremes or deformities of any kind. Neutered pedigree cats have their section for competition and any Household Pets shown must be all neutered.

At home with their owners pedigrees enjoy much the same lifestyle as any cat. Some will have outdoor access and others an enriched indoor only-environment, but this will depend on safety and the owner's choice, not on the fact they are shown. Primarily, they are companion animals, enriching the lives of the people they live with in the same way as any pet.

Travelling to/from, and being present at a show for one day, can in no way change this. The inspection of exhibitors' homes simply because they take one or more cats to a show would therefore serve no purpose. Their living conditions would be the same whether the cats in residence were not shown at all, were shown very occasionally or more frequently.

Our Shows

It is almost 150 years since the first cat show was held at Crystal Palace with exhibits admired by ladies in crinolines and gentlemen in top hats. The purposes of showing our cats to the public and at the same time engaging in competition remain the same, but during the intervening years codes of practice and show rules have evolved, with the emphasis most definitely on animal welfare.

Most cat shows attended by exhibitors who live in Wales are in England. Without exception travel to them is in the exhibitor's private vehicle and they must arrive in a suitable carrier (Show Rules Section 4:6). Prior to admission to the show hall all cats undergo a veterinary inspection and must show that they have the appropriate up to date vaccinations. A Duty Vet must remain in the hall at least until all judging has been completed.

It is believed that all of the guidance given within The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Animal Exhibits) (Wales) 2020 that is relevant to cat shows would be covered by GCCF's existing rules (copy enclosed). Risk assessments and emergency procedures are worked out with the venues, and all events have insurance.

Of particular note within the rules are:

- ✦ **Section 2:1-3** - licensing terms, that experience is necessary for show management and venue requirements
- ✦ **Section 2:13** - veterinary matters
- ✦ **Section 4:3-7** - health and welfare conditions that exhibitors must accept to allow entry
- ✦ **Section 4:16 20** - take account of comfort of the exhibit and withdrawal if it is distressed and cannot be handled safely.
- ✦ **Section 4 Notes** - explain the consequence of rejection at shows.
- ✦ **Sections 5 & 6** apply to veterinary surgeons and relevant in their entirety

The stringency of the rules relating to welfare, and their enforcement via our disciplinary procedures, mean that in practice very few cats are rejected from exhibition. Exhibitors are aware that if their cats are not in excellent health, good condition and unstressed by show procedures it is simply not worth taking them. There is no financial incentive, the only benefit is an enjoyable day out for the owner and cats.

General Observations

A) It is worth noting that in Defra's 'The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 Guidance notes for conditions for selling animals as pets, July 2018 the competitive showing of animals is put forward as an activity indicative of a hobby pursuit/ interest, particularly if in connection with club membership. Exhibiting cats does not equate to a business practice. It cannot be reiterated often enough that show cats are people's pets living in private homes.

B) The process of operating this licensing is puzzling. Given that in most cases exhibitors leave Wales and travel to England, unless there are to be border guards at the bridges and along Offa's Dyke on Saturday mornings and evenings to search the vehicles of those living within the principality it would seem that any legislation of this nature could not be effectively put into practice.

The alternative, of neighbours being asked to report on those they live near to who have animals they show, doesn't even bear thinking about, but it should be noted that some of our exhibitors who asked that this letter be written on their behalf were reluctant to write in and supply their own contact details in case they should in future find an inspector on their doorstep demanding admission to look around their home, and/or threatening the removal of their pets. Surely, such outcomes to this legislation cannot have been contemplated.

Conclusion

We ask that the Welsh Government adds the **'keeping of dogs and cats engaged in competitive events at shows regulated by the Kennel Club or GCCF'** to Regulation 3(4), which lists a number of exempted activities that are proposed should not be subject to the proposed licensing scheme.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. H. Hansson", written over a horizontal dotted line.

John Hansson (GCCF Chairman)