

## **ELCTORAL MEETING OF JUNE COUNCIL 2015**

The 200th anniversary Battle of Waterloo was close, but thankfully any references to blood and guts can be left out of this Council report! 123 delegates converged on the Conway Hall, London, on a warm day to a room where there was no air conditioning, but swords remained sheathed and we did without any heroic cavalry charges. As always, there were differences of opinion, and points to be made or lost, but this was a business meeting and good order and respect prevailed.

### **THE ELECTION RESULTS**

#### **New Vice-President**

It was a late item that didn't make the agenda, but as soon the Board was aware that Anne Gregory was no longer going to be a Board member it was agreed that the proposition that she become a GCCF Vice President should be put to this meeting. Delegates agreed, and she was elected to this honorary position by a very large majority. Anne is a well respected all breed judge and has given many years of service to a number of clubs and BACs, but her achievements for YES, and in promoting GCCF and cats to the public through the Pet Shows, have been above and beyond outstanding. Vice-President is an honorary title, but has to be earned and deserved, so congratulations on your achievement, Anne, and thank you on behalf of Council for your many years of commitment.

#### **Vice Chairman**

Since Keith Scruton stood down in November last year, there has been no Vice-Chair, and it's probably been fairly tough on the Chairman not to have someone with whom to share the workload and discuss problems. That time is at an end as John Hansson will join Steve Crow to complete the officer team. He was ahead by a majority on the first round of voting, and in the second achieved 82 votes to Sally Rainbow-Ockwell's 37. He managed to get from New Zealand (via Heathrow) to join the meeting later in the afternoon and hear the good news, and though not quite ready to face the bright lights of the stage, enjoyed the warm welcome.

#### **Board of Directors**

These are mostly old friends, but some new faces have joined the Board.

Gillian Bennett 95, Doreen Goadby 89, Jen Lacey 85, Helen Marriott-Power 85, Lynda Ashmore 81, Rosemary Fisher 78, Thomas Goss 78, Shelagh Heavens 75, Celia Leighton 75, Catherine Kaye 71, Pat Perkins 71, Sally Rainbow-Ockwell 71, John Robinson 68, Heather McCrae 60 and Sean Farrell 59.

The one reserve is Sandra Woodley. There were no other nominations.

### The Disciplinary Committees

Some will remember that for the first time applicants for these committees did not necessarily have to be delegates. Anyone bound by GCCF rules was invited to send in information they thought relevant and stand for election. As with the Board most elected are people with many years of experience, which is absolutely necessary, but there are newcomers and doubtless, while they will have much to learn, they will be able to add in a new perspective.

### Investigations Committee

Gillian Bennett 94, Michele Codd 74, Kym Jarvis 72, Claire Lewis 56, John Harrison, 46 and Lee Tipton 30.

The two reserves are Stephen McConnell and Penni Cragg.

### Disciplinary Committee

Shirley Bullock 99, Sue Amor 71, Elaine Culf 70, Sharara Crichton 68, Lizanne Kempzell 40, Maria Bryant 36

The reserves are Clive Wicks, Lorraine Burns and Penny Bennison

### Appeals Committee

There was no election for the Appeals Committee as there were not a sufficient number of applicants. As it was most unlikely that an appeal would happen in in the next few months it was agreed that applications would be sought and elections held in October. It's recognised that this is not thought of as an interesting committee, because it meets so very rarely, but because of the work involved it needs highly motivated and suitably skilled members. There was a suggestion that elections should always be held in October to set Appeals apart and make it special, and this found favour with delegates.

It should be noted that clubs who had not completed their returns (delegates were present from three) and fourteen clubs, who had not the numbers required to be eligible automatically to have a delegate present, were named to delegates to determine their right to continued participation in the meeting. Council granted the necessary dispensation to all to permit this.

## **NEWS**

### The new website is launched.

That went live from 5pm immediately after Council. Rosemary Fisher (who has put in hours of work on the project over many months) thanked those who had contributed and does want the message out to BACs that nothing is set in stone. If breed details need to be amended and updated then that can be done by BAC request.

She thanked DTC for the construction and the training both she and Marcia have been given to operate the new site, and there was a special tribute to Marcia for work in transferring all the show data, that is accessed and appreciated so much, across to the new system. A lot of the breed information and photographs have been supplied by BAC and club contacts and there are some really stunning pictures on there. So do all go and browse and enjoy. If you get stuck there is an internal search engine (though hopefully the pathways are straightforward.) Also there is a link through to the old site until it's certain that all the material that is wanted is been transferred, so no access is lost.

### Kitten Vaccination.

It's now a rule that kittens should be fully vaccinated at least a week ahead of going to their new homes, unless there's a signed agreement between the new owner and breeder that this should not be done. It's the three core vaccinations that are required, FPV (infectious enteritis), FHV and FCV (cat flu). Others remain entirely at the discretion of the breeder. The important message is that kittens are protected by vaccination and it's expected that those who breed ensure the course is completed. When it was advisory only the message was more mixed and this clarifies it absolutely for all concerned.

The hope is it reduces the number of complaints IC gets in relation to kitten being ill, which in turn means there are fewer sick kittens in actuality. There won't be additional work involved for DC, as it's a very straightforward situation and a fixed penalty fine will be levied on those who don't comply on the first two occasions.

## **BREED AND SHOW INFORMATION**

### Breed Promotions

A cheer went up to welcome the acceptance of the Ragamuffin to Championship Status. The BAC had put a lot of effort into the breeding policy from seeing the paperwork, and from the odd remark today it sounded as if the cats were getting their show bench quality appreciated too.

That's something the Sokoke breeders will now be working for. Their breed gained preliminary recognition and they will be on the hunt for the merit certificates. I believe they are fairly few in number at present, but as someone who has worked with a minority breed myself for over 35 years, I know quality counts over quantity any day.

I have no idea how many Persian LH exhibitors are waiting to show their Blue Chinchillas, Blue Shaded Silver and Blue Golden Persians, but the news is that now you can. Shows not yet closed, and in the future, can accept them in the appropriate breed classes for Chinchillas and Golden.

## Registration Matters

The revised registration policies for the Persian LH, Ocicat and Ocicat Classic were accepted. That for Ocicat Classic is unusual because Ocicat Classic is the breed name no longer, as it was decided that these cats will be known as Aztecs in the future (AZT agreed with FIFe). The BAC felt it necessary to create a more positive identity for the breed, and their rationale was supported by the Board and approved by Council. Now the various changes to paperwork will need to be made to make the change a reality.

The rules for Household Pet registration as proposed by the West of England & South Wales Cat Society were not discussed as earlier Council had accepted changes to the rules that ensured protection for breeder prefixes when HHPs were registered, which it was thought fulfilled the same purpose. It was stressed that there is no mandatory requirement for HHP registration, and that registered Pedigree Pets did not require any form of additional registration. Council had approved the principle of mandatory registration for HHPs who wanted to gain titles, but no date had been set for this to happen. Further proposals could be taken when this was considered practical.

The Chairman introduced the Outcrossing Policy put together by Anthony Nichols on behalf of the Genetics Committee. He stressed that it offered information and guidance to BACs, clubs and breeders, rather than being any sort of rule-book. He welcomed feedback and comment from BACs, especially when there was information to update statements made.

This gave the delegate for the Russian Blue Breeders Association an opportunity to comment that the study on genetic diversity frequently referenced (Lipinski et al) did not contain many British cats and the Russian BAC had commissioned its own study to determine the diversity of GCCF Russian Blues. The information from this would give exactly the sort of update required.

## Imports

A rule change confirmed that five was the maximum number of generations that could be required on the pedigree of an import. This had been standard practice for many years and reciprocated the three, four and five generation pedigrees GCCF issued for exports. It was stressed that breeders should be aware of the registration policies of other organisations and could make what checks they pleased in advance of importing, but the GCCF responsibility would be for five.

## **SHOW BUSINESS**

### The 2015 Supreme

The Show manager announced that schedules were ready, and from Friday evening the Supreme website would be updated and live.

News for all clubs to note was that the tables and exhibition pens of Club Row would be free of charge. It was a way of saying 'Please bring your lovely friendly cats to show off to the public'.

#### Exhibition classes with a critique

Approval of this proposal from the LaPerm Cat Club means that shows can offer exhibition classes for cats of breeds with full or preliminary recognition in which the breed class judge assesses the exhibit and gives a critique. It should allow breeders independent feedback on breeding cats that are not eligible to be shown in competition because they are referenced registered by the terms of their registration policy, but future generations will progress.

#### Show Rule Changes

The Norwegian Forest Cat BAC proposal that the use of icepacks/cool pads must be allowed in the show hall was confirmed as a rule.

A cat can enter a higher certificate class if a title is gained after the closing date stated on the schedule if an extension to the closing date is published on the GCCF website. (This should help some exhibitors who have been frustrated by the 'official' date being the original one).

Exhibitors may not receive any certificate and/or Best of Breed, Best of Variety or Best in Show awards from judges they have travelled with to that show in a private vehicle. (This was the most contentious of the rule changes, partly because it was felt to reflect on judge integrity, but it was proposed to address some grievances and is in keeping with the rules other organisations have for judges and referees.)

The Code of Conduct for Judges was updated to reflect the rule.

There were also rule updates as the outcome of the work by the BAC review group:

- Probationer judges are now Pupil Judges
- Pupil judges progressing from the stewarding scheme for the first time may offer their services to Show Managers.
- Judges of new breeds must be qualified to work in the section applied for.
- Judges will not lose their eligibility to judge a title class because of the restructuring of sections, breed groups and/or the addition of new breeds to a section or group (to be applied retrospectively to June 2012 so that any judge eligible to judge Olympian Classes when they were introduced is not now excluded subsequently).
- Pupil Judges may now obtain a tutorial if stewarding for a Full Judge of the relevant breed.

## Discussion

Kate Kaye, Chairman of the Show Structure Review Group lead a discussion on change in between the voting for committees. This focused on awards and titles for kittens and/or junior cats. There was some sympathy for the idea, but also strong feeling that there should not be further proliferation of classes as titles were cheapened. It was believed there was a need to know what would actually encourage show entries and Kate agreed, saying that the next step was to carry out a properly structured survey into what was liked starting from why particular shows were preferred . She asked for continued feedback and it was agreed that the email address to which this should be sent would be published on the website.

## Judges

All judge appointments were agreed, including those for the new Sokoke list.

This will be the last major list of judge appointments presented at Council. In future they will be published on the website on a weekly basis for a four week period and be deemed appointed if there are no objections in this time. Only those outstanding at the time of a Council meeting, or any objections, will still come to Council.

## **REPORTS**

### Chairman's address

Four new delegates were welcomed and Gwen Waugh (Persian judge) and Mike Findlay (40 years on the Veterinary Committee) were remembered in a few moments of silence.

After this introduction the Chairman focussed on giving news to update business that wasn't on the agenda rather than a review of the year, though certain matters were touched upon. Steve mentioned that he had missed the support of a Vice-Chair and noted that the number of Board meeting had been reduced to seven to keep costs down, and the intention was to keep it at that number. He also made a point of thanking the volunteers who gave their time freely to keep staff costs at a minimum. Marcia's contribution to maintaining the website on a daily basis was particularly appreciated.

There was an update on the staffing situation at the GCCF Office, to introduce Heather, a new member of staff, and explain that four people had left without other new appointments made, so all had been under a certain amount of pressure. Further staffing would be kept under review, but a policy was in place not to be overstaffed ahead of the launch of the new computer system.

The Cat Welfare Bill had died with the end of the last parliamentary session, but been resurrected (with some GCCF requested changes included) recently. However, there was no chance of it having anything more than a first reading as its patron, Lord Black, was

much too far down the order for it to progress. Cats Protection no longer had it as a focal point and was instead concentrating on their Cats Manifesto, but it would remain to provide discussion. The Breeding and Sale of Cats Group (the Chairman is a member) was engaged in collecting evidence to define problem areas, and there was continued effort to promote best practice in breeding as stated in GCCF rules, policies and ethics.

Steve gave a brief description of his time at the World Cat Congress in New Zealand, describing the show and seminar. Particular mention was given to the new discoveries by Professor Lyons' team, including the genes for white, recessive white spotting, and spasticity in Devon Rex. WCC is donating \$1,000 (Aus) to the 9 Lives Project. There had been strong support for the GCCF and Australian proposal that no species of wild cat should be present at any cat show licensed by one of the WCC organisations. It was approved with unanimous agreement.

Finally, there was a quick update on the GCCFI request that GCCF provide its online services. This would mean additional IT expenditure, and costs had been sent to GCCFI together with payment options, so that they could discuss with these with their Board and Council.

### Business and IT Matters

Mrs Rainbow-Rockwell took delegates through the progress that had been made to further each of the aims of the 2015 Business Plan. She touched briefly upon the IT development, positive contact with GCCFI, the work being done to stimulate marketing, the changes to the disciplinary committees and the reviews underway of show structure and the BAC judge training process. The Business Plan was formally approved by Council, and it was noted that the Annual Report for 2014 was published and available to delegates.

The decision to purchase access to full facilities offered by Survey Monkey for at least a year was also reported. This will be used by the working groups to test ideas and plans, but please note it will also be available to clubs if any should wish to carry out surveys of their own amongst their membership.

There is an announcement on Project Phoenix on the website, as initially it was hoped that a start date for change would be close to this Council meeting. However, because one of the key volunteers was unavailable at the start of the year, and the months ahead are particularly busy in the GCCF Office with holidays and work for the Supreme, the target is now set for November. Assurance was given this would enable intensive staff training, and gave time to consult BACs on any registration policy anomalies.

However, the new online system did have one additional enhancement. Breeders can now purchase their own customised pedigrees directly, and make use of GCCF records in this respect.

## Partnership Reports

The Chairman first gave a brief mention to the relationship the company has with Agria, and that it had proved financially successful. We are at the half way stage of the current contract's term and there will be a review next year on whether to enter into negotiations for renewal or to look for an alternative partner.

Before taking comments on the Royal Canin contract Steve took delegates through the information that had been given in advance of the contract being signed, and the fact that there had been no objections. It was reiterated that the purpose in making commercial links was to add income without having to increase prices for breeders, clubs and exhibitors. These had been held now for over four years. However, when objections had been received from breeders, there had been some immediate response. Details of the parents had been returned to the certificates and breeders could obtain registration cards without the advert by direct request.

Objections raised reflected dislike that the Royal Canin name was on the registration card. It was queried whether there couldn't be separate paperwork that gave details of the offer. The Chairman replied that was not what RC had wanted because it could too easily be discarded and not reach the new owners as was the intention. A point made from the floor was that it was very much the same thing as high profile footballers being expected to run round in jerseys bearing a commercial sponsor's name very prominently. We couldn't take without giving something in return.

Delegates were assured that the contract was for one year only and there would be close monitoring to see whether the results were positive, negative or there was no impact. The first report would be made to Council in October. Information would also be supplied on reviews made by the Board and Finance on whether to renew the contract and/or pursue links with other companies.

## Cat Welfare Trust

Rosemary Fisher gave the Annual Report on behalf of the CWT. It was in two parts: the first giving details of the projects the Trust had sponsored during the past year, and then there was an update on the Board of Trustees. The main project is research into the genetics of the feline immune system. It's taken much longer than anticipated to publish results because of the complexity of the study and the illness of a key researcher, but is in progress once again.

Last year it was announced that the scope of the Trust would widen to support projects put forward by clubs and/or BACs, and the first of these had begun. This was study into the diversity of the GCCF Russian Blues. £1,500 to match fund money the club provided had doubled the number of cats included in the study.

Approaches had also been made to the Trust on HCM and PRA so it was probable that other studies would be financed in the future. Rosemary assured delegates that every penny gained by the Trust was spent on feline research, nothing went on advertising or administration.

There had been three resignations from the Trust Board earlier in the year and three names had been proposed to replace them. Pat Perkins, by the GCCF Board, Dr Karen Kempself by the Genetics Committee, and Juanita Sharpe (who had completed the ICC course in feline breeding & welfare with top honours) by the GCCF Veterinary Officer. These nominees had been accepted.

### Finance

The company's 2014 accounts were presented by its accountant, Adrian Wood of O'Hara Wood, a company that has looked after GCCF for many years, and given advice in difficult times. I'm not an accountant and Adrian was kind enough to pass me his notes so for this section I quote from these and the accounts are published on the website so that reference can be made.

The overall conclusion was: 'the financial statement represents a fair reflection of the Cat Fancy's current financial position. In summary GCCF made a small surplus of approximately £10,00 after seeing a decline in income and a reduction in costs.'

The turnover was lower by £5,923 (1.7%) and the decrease in expenditure £7,243 (3.5%). After allowing for other operating income and miscellaneous income a gross profit of £174,999 was generated compared to £149,771 in the previous year, an increase of £25,228 or 16.8%.

The message seems to be one of satisfactory performance, but there was contention over the presentation of the loan to clubs. Previously none of this had needed to be spent as IT expenses were met from regular income. This year the IT company has been paid most of its fee for work on Project Phoenix so it had all been spent, though money has been set aside to pay it. However, it is a proportion of the money rather than all of it, as it is not due to be repaid until 2017 and the repayment was planned to be staged over the interim years. All I can say two accountants had different views on how this should be shown. By a majority Council voted to accept the accounts so that a return could be made to Companies House by the end of September, but wanted clearer notes on the debt owing to clubs and the manner of the subsequent repayment. This will be a matter for the Finance Committee and the Board in consultation with Mr Wood.

That ends my Council reports. We did get through most of the business with just a few minutes to spare before the five o'clock deadline. The one item that had a short discussion and comment, but was not taken to a vote was the Code of Conduct relating to social media use and GCCF.

It was promised a prominent spot on the agenda for the October Council meeting which will again begin at 12 noon to accommodate this debate and the Appeals Committee election.

Jen Lacey  
18 June 2015