

THE ELECTORAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, JUNE 2019



It was time for the June Council meeting, midday at the Conway Hall, but seats were empty and there hadn't been the usual rush to sign in. A quick count of the remaining envelopes showed about half hadn't been collected.

Rail problems had caused some delays, though by the time the meeting started some fifteen minutes later more had arrived and others trickled in later, but it was certainly a very low turn-out for an electoral meeting with 89 delegates, around 10% down on the previous year, but with travel into Waterloo very difficult possibly some had decided not to make the attempt.

The day began as usual with time for a thought for old friends.

Lorraine Allen, Bruce Bennett, Pat Creaton, Jennifer Fleming, Enid Holmes, Janet Powell, Ali Ross and Catrina Simpson were remembered in a moment of silence.

There was then a quick diversion into GCCF's history. In his opening remarks the Chairman, John Hansson, mentioned that the Board had recently been discussing club and delegate qualification to be present at Council. That prompted Steve Crow to ask if the member clubs that became GCCF in 1910, giving up rights of their own, should continue to have representation even if they did not comply with the duties of members as described as set out in the Byelaws. By a show of hands it was concluded 'in perpetuity' meant exactly that, so representation could not be removed. However, that did not mean that other sanctions could not be applied, as it was unfair on all other clubs if the founders could opt out of their responsibilities altogether.

CLUBS

Shelagh Heavens had lead for the Board on club returns and had been busy checking accounts and membership. She introduced herself and offered to take questions, but there were none at that time. Dispensation has to be requested and formally approved if a club had not completed its returns or had fallen below the number for delegate entitlement. This year there were just two in the first category, and twelve in the second. Their representatives present were able to take their places with unanimous approval.

Finally, there were three applications for Full GCCF Membership to be considered from:

- ✚ The Sokoke Breed Club
- ✚ The Devon Rex Owners Club
- ✚ The Bengal Cat Association

The first two were approved and the third deferred as some concerns were raised for Board investigation.

BYELAW CHANGE

This brought the Investigations Committee into line with the other two disciplinary committees, and removed the right of people to sit on both IC and the Board, to reduce the risk of conflict of interest. The quorum was reduced to three which was also as the other committees. The change went ahead with just one abstention. It had the immediate impact of giving six rather than five Board places as Dr Gillian Bennett chose to remain on IC.



ELECTIONS

It was the Electoral Meeting and the elections were the main feature of the day. They are not all held at once as sometimes the results of one have to be known before it's certain who is eligible for the next, but eventually each GCCF Committee had the required number of people and two reserves.

Results:

The Board of Directors

Tommy Goss (57) Lynda Ashmore (52) Lisa Robinson-Talboys (51) Gavin Eyres (50) Elaine Robinson (50) Jen Lacey (45). Heather McRae was also in that ballot and became 1st reserve, and when nominations were received from the floor at a later stage Ketill Game topped a poll of three to become 2nd reserve.

Finance Committee

Maria Chapman-Bear (72), Shelagh Heavens (59) Steve Crow (58), Tommy Goss (49), and Rosemary Fisher (47), with Ketill Game (41) as reserve. Later Nicola Ryan was sole nominee as second reserve.

Disciplinary Committee

Barbara Prowse (55) and Maria Bryant (53) were re-elected to DC with Helen Crea as first reserve. In the second part of the ballot Sue Dalton-Hobbs came first of seven volunteers and so became second reserve.

Investigations Committee

Stephen Abrahams and John Harrison were the only two applicants for the two committee places and so were duly appointed. In the ballot for reserves Zaneel Abidin and Lady Audrey Saye were appointed from the other six as first and second reserve.

The Company Accounts for 2018

I suppose it's best to quote the bottom line first. It was another year of surplus for GCCF on its operating accounts, £28,293 in 2019 to £20,141. At the end of the year the reserves had increased to £489,818. However, it had been a year when expenditure had risen in total and in several different areas, but fortunately increased income had offset this. The company benefitted tremendously from its partnership with Agria (£86,153). In answer to a query from the floor the Chairman responded that at present there was no plan B. It seemed unlikely that we would find another supporter to provide such a substantial sum.

This year the accounts had been fully audited, primarily because there had been an unusually high turnover of staff in the Office in 2018, including two Office Managers and a new bookkeeper, and this was to provide the new team with a baseline. Denise (OM) had said she had found it extremely useful and suggestions for new procedures had been made by the auditing team that she and Leanne were now implementing. Laura (Monahans) thanked the Office staff for their co-operation.

The audit report drew attention to two areas of weakness. There weren't full stock records, but this was to be expected with new staff and a first full audit. Also, there wasn't documentation to support the capitalisation for the computer system development over the past five years. Again, not surprising or critical because computer support and development overlapped and were often carried by the same person. Almost a clean bill of health!

Questions from the floor focussed on two or three areas. Some delegates were interested in a particular item of expenditure and queried why it had risen, or was such a large figure. Bank charges were one such example. This was the cost of card use, and Denise had the good news that they had found another supplier and were hoping to be able to make a considerable saving.

There was frustration that in both the main and Supreme accounts a 'miscellaneous' line featured with a large total against it. Delegates reiterated that they had asked repeatedly for this not to be the case. Even if all of the detail wasn't listed it should be available.

The concern that attracted the most questions was the STAR money held for clubs for shows. It wasn't shown at all and Laura explained that it wasn't that there weren't records, but that it wasn't GCCF's money to show. Denise explained that it was money that was in and out very rapidly and show entries were received and passed on. At the year end there had been just £270 held. There was still some feeling that there should be a separate bank account, but it was pointed out this would raise costs. It was a matter of assessing risk and benefit.

Eventually, the 2018 accounts were approved with just one against. However, a commitment was given that the Supreme accounts would return in October showing the extra detail requested.

That was the end of the formal business of the company's AGM. It was then time to move onto what is sometimes described as the 'furry' side.

BREED AND SHOW NEWS



Just three breeds had registration policy and/or SOP amendments this time. The **Cornish & Devon Rex** and the **Siberian** had all incorporated the new GCCF rules (Section 1:12cii & 17a) into their registration policies which allowed for quicker progression to the supplementary register for foundation imports and outcrosses.

It is certainly proving a popular fast track with the intention to encourage those interested in breed development to get their cats onto the show bench and invite judge input. All had also updated their policies concerning imports, so if working with one of these breeds and planning to import please check with the BAC.

A rule change affects breeders of **white cats** of all breeds. If selling a white cat or kitten it will be necessary to tell the owner in writing that it could be deaf in one or both ears. It was considered that it wasn't just a matter of being fair to a new owner, it was also essential for the cat's welfare that information was given on the potential for problems.



Judges

All judge appointments were confirmed. There weren't many names on the agenda this time. Possibly they are in waiting for the next stage of the fast track scheme!

Judge Training Review Group

Peter Collin reported that stage one of the proposals agreed in Council in February had been fully implemented.

- ✚ The eligibility for the Imperial in Section 2 & 4 was now at 2 grands rather than 3
- ✚ Judges were judging all breeds they had previously been judging at Grand and/or Imperial level in the multi-breed sections, including section 5

- ✦ All had been informed and had an opportunity to check. The qualification held on the system and the list produced for Managers were all updated.

Preparations were well underway for the next stage of 'fast-track'. New tutorial forms had been completed and information was ready to go to BACs. It was expected that the lists would be finalised shortly and they would then be sent to judges who would have the option of which they wanted to join.

The 2019 Supreme Show

John Hansson reported that preparations were well under way with all judges booked and the hotel and Gala Dinner reservations now being taken. The classes this year would be as they were in 2017. He confirmed that the halls were as usual but only the space required had been hired. Therefore the ring layout would not be as difficult to negotiate as in the previous year.

The World Cat Congress

John also gave a brief update on this. John Smithson a cat history enthusiast in New Zealand would be able to make a really worthwhile display on 150 years of showing. However, GCCF would have to pay his costs for getting here. It would depend on whether we wished to spend to get quality. It was acknowledged the occasion would be expensive for GCCF, but it was an opportunity for promotion and money was being saved on a monthly basis.

Show Rule Changes

There was a lot of text in connection with these, but mostly in connection with the notes on the vaccination rules. Assurance was given that there was little that was new. It was mainly for clarification.

1. The sale of white cats – the requirement to give information on deafness
2. Additions to the import rules allowed electronic pedigrees to be sent from another registry to GCCF, as discussed in February.
3. There were a few extra words in the vaccination rule for cats and kittens going to new homes to define 'fully vaccinated'
4. A note on show management qualification clarified that forms from all breed shows were required to count towards an all-breed show manager qualification.
5. The vaccination rules now had a series of notes to explain each point and Dr Sue Moreland (GCCF VO) had come to take questions. She explained that the whole purpose was to stop cats being rejected at vetting in unfairly. There would be further notes for exhibitors and some for Duty Vets.

This time all of the above were approved. However, a proposal from the East Sussex that there should not be mandatory neutering for household pets at six months. It was hoped the age could rise to nine months to allow female kittens a longer period of showing. However, it was thought that a note to HHP judges on not penalising youngsters who had been spayed would be sufficient. There were welfare risks – early pregnancy, if a cat was left, particularly a number of HHPs would have outdoor access.

BUSINESS & REPORTS

In AOB Steve Crow mentioned that the **Business Plan** was on the website and he had received no queries. Delegate seemed happy to accept that it was finalised.

Partnerships

John Hansson mentioned a meeting with Royal Canin in July, but took the opportunity to put emphasis on the need for breeders to use the kitten policies. To do so was vital for the continued relationship with Agria and the income it brought.

Licensing & Welfare

Steve Crow said he had intervened with local authorities at breeder request on two occasions. He had also prepared information for the Office to assist breeders. However, at present the work in the Canine & Feline Sector Group was concentrating on the implications of leaving the EU. Depending on the future relationship with Europe it could make travel abroad with pets and importing more difficult. There could be revision of the rabies policy because of heightened concerns and breeders always needed to check to ensure there had been no recent changes. He hoped the delayed launch of the Kitten Check List would now be next month. DEFRA's Cat Breeding Code was still a work in progress.

IT

Steve also took the lead on this and explained the intentions for the year were consolidation, bug fixing and enhancing the system in small ways. Caroline Turner-Russell had been extremely helpful in organising a team of testers, for the Office and externally. A third release of updates was due next month. Ian Macro was now working two days a week for GCC, so we no longer had a full time programmer, but that was in line with requirements at present. The development of STAR was ongoing and there was a four point action plan for its completion that included the system, the production of manuals and agreements.

Sally Rainbow Ockwell proposed that the Board should consider a review from an independent IT expert to check the system and IT processes were robust. There was agreement that the Board should give this some thought.

IC/DC

Kym Jarvis had produced statistics showing the IC case load had decreased significantly this year (13%). However, she was concerned that the sale of sick cats/kittens was the one that had risen (9%) as most involved cats suffering serious illness and possibly death, which was devastating for both cat and owner. Instances of FIP were regularly mentioned and this disease continued to be a matter of serious concern,

Cat Welfare Trust

Rosemary Fisher could not be at the meeting, but had sent a report. Project 4 was almost concluded, but the final summary had not yet been received. As soon as it was it would be on the website. Two breed projects were being supported. There was work ongoing on HCM in British SH cats with the eventual aim of developing a DNA test, and AHT and Nottingham Trent University were working towards mapping genes in white deaf and hearing cats.

The positive ending? Depends on whether you have time on your hands I suppose. It was suggested that Board meetings should be live streamed. That's about five hours of people around a table talking, but with meetings at the Kennel Club it could be possible, if not now, then in the not too distant future.



[Jen Lacey 21.6.2019](#)