

Report of Council Meeting held on Thursday 23rd June 2011

Agenda National CC & West Country proposals

It was the first AGM of the new limited company and, with delegates coming to a new venue and knowing that elections this year would bring fresh faces to the principal posts, I'd say there was a certain air of expectancy about the day. Mr Hansson (retiring Chairman) opened the meeting shortly after midday, and after the solemnity of pausing to remember those who would no longer be with us again (Mary Kalal, Jeremy Potter, Des Leigh and Moira Mack), John's brief remarks had a positive and upbeat note.

He thanked all members of EC who had given time and expertise generously, often participating at their own expense. There was a tribute to the office staff, particularly for the efforts they'd made in driving down costs, thus contributing to the small operating surplus (very good news) and Marcia Owen was congratulated and thanked for the all the time she gives to maintaining the website as a vital information source, always updating it rapidly, and donating her time generously. The Supreme had been turned from major loss to small but significant profit, and over the year new ventures had been tried and proved successful, such as the London Pet Show, lottery and the Gala Dinner. It was a centenary year to be proud of and he trusted that support would now be given to the new officers and committees elected. There should be no them and us because it was 'our' GCCF

It was something of a relief that the minutes were not picked through, abiding by a decision taken at the previous meeting, and as the new Chairman took over the meeting there was reiteration of the need to be cooperative. She acknowledged that no one would be pleased with all decisions, but she intended there would be moves forward, at a pace that most could be happy with, with compromise made. The remarks were in tune with the mood of the delegates and from that point it was clear that Mrs Marriott-Power had taken on the role of Chairman with a determination to mark it with the stamp of her own personality. She combined keeping the meeting in order with a sense of humour and lightness of touch, which seemed well appreciated.

Financial Statement

The first main business of the day was looking in detail at the finances, with auditor, Mr Adrian Wood, of O'Hara Wood. The Bridgwater office property had depreciated in value and its worth was adjusted at incorporation to reflect its current resale price. That reduced the capital value of GCCF, but it has to be accepted that property prices have fallen. Overall it was the single piece of gloomy news. The price increases that had been put in place had been targeted accurately so that although registrations had dropped income from them hadn't deteriorated. This, coupled with savings in expenditure, and enhanced by a donation to buy new printing equipment, had turned around the deficit of over £52,000 to a profit of just under £14,500.

At the end of questioning on certain particulars of the expenses, Mr Wood was asked if he was now happy with GCCF after he'd given such dire predictions when speaking to Council previously. He replied that he was. Issues that he'd highlighted had been addressed, with the surplus as the result, and he believed it particularly encouraging that the positive trend was continuing as shown in the February-May trading figures. Income was exceeding expenditure by a small amount, and although registration figures were volatile no sustained fall was indicated.

It was perhaps no surprise that the accounts were adopted unanimously and O'Hara Wood reappointed as auditors. It was confirmed that Stephen Bunce had resigned as Treasurer and a vote of thanks was accorded to him in appreciation for the work he'd done free of charge over the year. It wasn't anticipated that there would be a replacement Treasurer, but that book keeping would be handled in the office, possibly subject to external review. The procedure was presently under discussion, with estimates sought, and decisions yet to be made.

Before moving from finance it's worth a mention that Gillian Bennett had prepared information to show just where money went in the IC/DC and complaints process. As noted previously it was clear that the secretarial salary took a large proportion, but that meant a single experienced person dealing efficiently with complaints so that the office staff did not have to become much involved. Dr Bennett said that as an exercise she'd compared the NHS's proportion of spending on complaints to GCCF's. We did much better with a total of 5.8% of our expenditure compared to 15% of theirs.

Business notes

The assets of GCCF (members' club) had now been transferred to the new company, and this was the final act of incorporation. There would no longer be a need for updates on the process as it was completed. Steve Crow commented briefly on the business plan that had been available on the website for some time. It now had income/expenditure projections added to it, as had been requested by Council. The next task would be for a review to assess what actions had been completed, what was still to be done and consider works in progress.

An IT review was presented, that I'm sure will be on the website shortly. It stated what was aimed for and the benefits that would accrue to various sections of GCCF, such as BACs and Show Management, in addition to the much needed on-line registration and transfer process. At present just over half the money (£42k) had been raised and about 45% of clubs had as yet made no response.

It was confirmed that private individuals could loan or gift money, but that pledges only were required at present. Earlier, Mr Hansson had reiterated that all loans to the previous computer fund had been repaid, a fact that the auditor could confirm. Any black hole into which money had disappeared was a myth. The next decision that would have to be made was whether to go ahead with money currently pledged, by assessing what improvements could be made with the amount raised which was as yet well short of the target.

Judges and Judging Reports

All judge promotions and withdrawals went ahead, as listed on the main and supplementary agendas. Mrs Margaret Kidd is now an Emeritus Judge. The National Cat Club had asked for clarification to be given on exactly which classes (and cats within them) should be written up for judge reports. After some discussion to which some overloaded judges, show managers and exhibitors contributed remarks from their different perspectives, it was concluded that at present guide lines are in operation rather than there being any hard and fast rules on this. It was agreed it would be subject to review by the Guild of Judges with views from all parties invited. Mrs Dean (Guild Secretary) hoped to have responses in time for a presentation to the EC September meeting

Rule Changes

The three rule changes were straightforward and went through without dissension. HHPs are not excluded from shows for abnormalities defined as veterinary defects in pedigree cats in competition, such as bent ears, curly tails and polydactyly, although they must not be declared. It was made clear this applied to both pedigrees pets and non-pedigrees pets within the HHP section.

The strict timetable for breed promotion submissions was removed. If approved by Council they will be implemented not less than six months following the meeting. Also, temporary registration of overseas cats was formalised to enable their entry at specially designated shows. It was confirmed that the computer was ready to accept this type of registration and that EC would review charges to ensure office costs were covered whenever such an event was arranged.

Shaded Silver Persians

Despite continued opposition from a single club without BAC representation, it was agreed by a substantial majority that Shaded Silver Persians should be shown in Chinchilla classes in future, as proposed by the Persian Tipped and Smoke BAC. With the breed show less than 6 months ahead dispensation was granted so that the class could be offered.

Registration Policy and SOP Changes

The Ragdoll Registration policy was approved, though there was a query concerning whether DNA testing for non-agouti was an option for cats imported onto the register. It was agreed this would be clarified.

The Main Coon SOP revision was approved with the addition of 'dew' - reading now, 'one dewclaw on each front leg' - to remove any ambiguity.

Supreme and World Cat Congress News

Mrs Leighton confirmed all was on schedule for this year's Supreme with problems with the NEC now sorted. The schedules would be out by mid July.

Quite a lot had now been planned for the show side of the World Cat Congress event to take place in May 2013. The designated show was Suffolk and Norfolk. There was some thought that the seminar could have a 'genetic' theme, but this had yet to be arranged.

Cat Welfare Trust

There was no report from the Cat Welfare Trust, though known that a new project with Langford had been started. There was comment that more information from CWT should be forthcoming. It was a flagship within GCCF and its profile needed raising accordingly. There was some doubt that many would know of its existence.

Show Awards Debate

The final hour and a bit was given over to discussing the show awards system. At one point there was an observation that the only consensus was that everyone wanted something different, but it became clear that there were three areas of concern. Breed clubs should not be excluded from offering an award that counted for something. HHP exhibitors felt that if pedigree exhibits could aim for an award higher than Imperial then they should have the same opportunity. Possibly the most contentious was the belief that some exhibitors disliked the not having two open classes to aim for, and there should be a system in place that wholly or partially reversed that established by majority vote at the March meeting that each cat should enter just one certificate class, and BOB if so wished. Others felt equally strongly that the very recent change had been supported by many, and should be given at least a year, if not more, for exhibitors to get a feel for how it worked in practice.

Olympian Award at Breed Clubs

The proposal from Yorkshire County Club and Birman Cat Club, supported by the Northern Birman Cat Club, that there should be expansion of the Olympian system to breed club and other non-all-breed shows, so that one Olympian certificate at each level of bronze, silver and gold, could count towards a cat gaining the Olympian title, was voted upon and passed by a large majority. This to take immediate effect so that any classes offered by such already designated as open only to Imperial cats would become Olympian Classes.

Olympian Award and Structure to be applied to the Household Pet Section

The other agreement was that the Olympian structure should also be applied to HHP classes. Pedigree and non-pedigree pets would now enter only one certificate class, but have an Olympian Class offered.

As it was now past 5pm it was agreed other proposals that could reverse decisions taken in March, should be brought to the next meeting. This would allow further opportunity for discussion at club level which was only fair

Jen Lacey

Member of the Board of Directors

The following proposals were approved by significant majority vote at the Meeting of Council held 23 June 2011.

Item C1800.2.1

"The Yorkshire County Cat Club proposes, with immediate effect, an amendment to the structure of the new Olympian Classes, so that in addition to Olympian Certificates awarded at All-Breed Championship shows, one of the five certificates required at each different level of bronze, silver and gold, may be awarded at a single breed show, or at a show which caters for fewer breeds than an all breed show."

Item C1800.2.2

"The Birman Cat Club proposes, with immediate effect, that Household Pet and Pedigree Pets are afforded the same opportunity to compete for Olympian Certificates in an equal fashion to the Pedigree Section."

It should be noted that the rule changes for these awards are not in place and will be determined by the Executive Committee and brought to the October Council meeting for approval. The Council voted approval of this method to move forward with the revised awards as soon as possible.

Show Managers are allowed to add Olympian Classes, or change the classification of Ribbon classes for both the Pedigree Section and Household Pet Sections provided their closing date for entries has not passed.

Delegates were asked to take away the other two proposals from the National Cat Club item C1800.2.3 and the West Country Cat Club item C1800.2.4 to consider and discuss this with their Committees, members and exhibitors so a further discussion and decision on the proposals can be made at the October Council.

Mark Goadby

Office Manager