

Report on GCCF Council Meeting, February 22nd 2012

The meeting proper began remembering friends and colleagues who shared our hobby but were no longer with us.

Shirley Attrill, Liz Harris, Paula Lloyd, Freda Matthias, Bernard Morris, Chris Pape Stephanie Roberts, Judith Steels, Peter Talboys and Glenda Worthy

Then there was a great deal of business to deal with, including news of changes coming that will affect all who register, and some of those who exhibit. I recommend taking note particularly of:

- New registration forms
- The IT project detail concerning mating certificates and joint ownership
- Amendment to the prefix rule if you're thinking of applying
- Detail of the judge report discussion, including the recommendation
- Supreme Show news
- Household Pet registration for traditional HHPs and Pedigree pets

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without question, as there were no queries on any the meeting minutes supplied.

Finance

The first official trading period (10 months) had been completed by GCCF Ltd and the accounts were presented by Adrian Wood of O'Hara Wood, the accountant firm that scrutinised GCCF finances over a long period. He first stressed that as the accounting now had to be done according to legal requirements for a limited company they were in a different format, and that there could be no accurate comparison between this year and last. However, as GCCF remained a company trading for its members' benefit it did not attract tax.

The bottom line was an overall surplus for the period of £25,533. Mr Wood commented that he was seeing the accounts of a number of small businesses coming to terms with the current economic climate and GCCF was modestly successful. He was optimistic for the future especially as there had been an appreciable turn around from a very difficult period two years ago, with income increased and costs cut.

Business Plan

The Vice-Chairman presented the third business plan by explaining the purpose. It was an a structured programme of what there was to be done, assessed how well previous actions had been carried through, and thought through what was likely to occur. In the first year stability had been all important, with streamlining and cutting unnecessary expenses, then came the possibility of investing in new structures such as the IT project. The next planning had to consider diversification and new income streams without GCCF actually trading and attracting tax. This could include offering HP registration, a Premier Prefix Scheme, some gradual international expansion, and partnership with other companies for mutual benefit. Steve was thanked for his work on producing the plan (full document is available for download from the website) and I think it's no coincidence that the financial turn round coincided with

determination that the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy, a company limited by guarantee, should operate according to sound business practice. All credit that this has been so ably carried out.

New format for registration forms

The Office Manager drew delegates' attention to a new addition on registration forms. They would carry boxes to be ticked to show whether breeders and owners were prepared to release information to third parties. This was to explore another possible source of income, but was not directed to anything specific yet.

Household Pet Registration

Mrs Gregory outlined the possibility for this once the new online registration process was in operation. Numbers of HHPs had increased and it was now getting very difficult for one person to operate the awards system by hand, though an exceptional job had been done getting this established. Computerisation was now needed, though registration would only be compulsory if awards and titles were to be claimed, not for those having a day out with their children's pet. It would mean title winners could be on the website in the same way that pedigree achievement was logged to celebrate the care and pride HHP exhibitors have for their cats. Those showing registered pedigree pets would have to reregister in the HHP scheme. It was envisaged that the registration certificate could carry a photograph to enable guidance to the appropriate class for colour and hair length. Possibly it would assist with determining pedigrees pets from traditional HHPs, but even where this was impossible without genetic testing it would fix a cat into its category and prevent swaps and changes between the two, so disliked by regular competitors. In addition to name purchase it was proposed that a suffix could be bought so that Fluff wasn't just that but Fluff of Beaumaris, for example, to make each pet unique.

IT Project.

This will be ready for testing internally from next month. Providing it goes to plan being able to apply for your registration on your computer will become a reality later this year. Provision for payment has been arranged. We were reminded that what would be carried out was an on-line application for registration. The actual registration process would still be carried out on the GCCF computer without applicants contacting its information base. However, there was the opportunity for removal of minor errors in data and the correct money would be taken, saving returns that have to be made for this purpose at present.

Mating certificates would still have to be obtained, and confirmed by tick box. The computer would generate a random call-in of a percentage, and if the stud owner's email details were available in the office a mail would be sent informing them of the litter registration. It was considered that confirming details of both owners would be difficult in cases of joint ownership, so registration of jointly owned cats and kittens would be operated severally. This may be extended to show entry forms too in the future.

Prefixes

The proposal to allow the passing on a prefix after the owner's death was withdrawn as it was shown to need tighter definition. However, the symbols on a standard English keyboard can now be added in prefix formation. Hyphens and apostrophes may well prove popular.

Judge Promotion and Withdrawal

All judges and the full and supplementary agenda were accepted. It should be noted that Charis White was put forward as a Full Judge of Russians, not a PJ, as was on the main agenda. Mrs Joan Smith became a PJ for Oriental Selves and Mrs Elizabeth Corps for Oriental Selves and Oriental Longhairs.

The Russian BAC had asked for the names of Mrs A Bailey and Mrs H Dessauer to be removed from the Russian Full Judge list, as they hadn't judged for over five years and there had been no response to contact. This was agreed. Mrs J Haggart was withdrawn as Oriental Probationer Judge.

Judge Reports

This was an item that provoked debate. Mrs Dean presented the information gleaned from the survey carried out on behalf of the Judges Guild and it was clear there was a distinct divide between exhibitor aspiration and what a judge can cope with. Several delegates made the point that what their members wanted was that every cat at a show should receive at least one report. The simplest way to do this would be to recommend the Breed Class judge should write on every exhibit, even if in the class solely for BOB. In addition the placed of the other certificate classes should be written up and the reports should give clear reasons for withholding awards.

However, judges pointed out that with shows cutting costs and having judges that cover numerous breeds as best for finance, the recommendation of 70 handlings per day was more frequently ignored than in times past. One pointed out that she had 87 exhibits in breed classes and it was impossible to be expected to write full or even short reports (suggested as a compromise) on all of those. She declared frankly that she just wouldn't do it.

So the recommendation that passed was that judges should produce reports on the first three Breed Class winners and the Best of Breed if this is another cat, also on the placed cats in titled classes. Judges may do more if they do not have a heavy load of cats in certificate classes, and exhibitors can approach a judge for comment after judging if they are available, or by email. There was some thought that the office could offer a service to direct emails rather than each judge having to provide an address, but this will have to be checked for practicality.

This compromise will probably satisfy judges rather than exhibitors, but if a service for contacting judges can be offered and they respond to queries, perhaps we have to accept that it's not possible to give heavy breed class loading and expect critiques per exhibit. It was pointed out that after the first few these become rather meaningless regurgitations of the SOP anyway. However, the Chairman promised review in a year's time so there will be an opportunity to

assess how it works in practice and take account of the exhibitor satisfaction level.

Breed Business

The LaPerm gained Championship Status to a round of applause, and the SH Somalis and Dilute Series of Green-eyed Silver and Golden Persians were given Preliminary Recognition.

It should be noted that rules revised today make it crystal clear when these promotions are actioned. Its 4 months before the LaPerms compete for their challenge and premier certificates in Championship, but the new Persian colours and Somali SH merit classes may be in schedules as soon as its practical for Show Managers to do so. There's no designated waiting period. The Somali SHs will be in the SLH section as they stand in the same relation to Somalis as Exotics do to Persians - only the coat length is different.

The revised SOPs for the Chinchilla Group and for the Siamese Cat were approved.

The revised registration policies for the Chinchilla Group and Australian Mist were accepted.

The Burmese Cat Association was granted pre-affiliation (pre-affiliation will be termed provisional membership at the next bye-law revision)

The Norwegian Forest BAC had requested registration recognition for the amber gene, a mutation found solely in NF cats as far is known to date. There was some concern that something harmful could be spread because at present this was a new phenomenon. Assurance was given that neither the BAC nor Genetics Committee who had looked at the scientific information could see any indication of this. It simply produced a new colour, and as it could be tested for tracking was sensible so that breeders could select for or against it as preferred. Indeed, if new research showed later it was linked to a health issue, it would be extremely useful to know where carriers were. People who wanted more information were advised to contact the Genetics Committee via the office.

The three other BAC matters were withdrawn for further consultation, though the 50/50 judging qualification for Oriental Grand and Imperial Classes was supported in principle as it brought it in line with other sections. There was some sympathy for the simplification of removing the colour notation from breeds where colour carried no points, but as some believed shows gave a useful teaching/learning opportunity in judge breeder discussion, no unanimity amongst the BACs whose breeds would be affected.

The Supreme

Mrs Leighton said she had good and bad news and there was a demand to face the worst first. This was the date had to change. The show will now take place one week later on 24th November to avoid it clashing with a Top Gear Special that swamps the facilities. Apologies have been sent to clubs who were holding shows on 1st December and if they can change dates this will be allowed.

What is new is from next year there will be an Imperial Class offered and only cats with an Imperial title will be permitted in the UK Grand, as this will be the ultimate accolade. The entry qualification will be removed as it affected very few cats anyway, and cats from other registries will be invited once again. It's hoped that further relaxation of import requirements will mean that outstanding European cats are attracted.

Publication list of those standing as Directors.

It was agreed that the list should be published on the GCCF website at least 30 days ahead of the June Council meeting in order that clubs have an opportunity for consultation. However, this will not be expected of those standing for other Committees, and indeed is impractical for some, so a slight change from the agenda item.

Other rule and Bye-Law changes

All amendments to the rules concerning class structure and the Olympian are now at last officially adopted. The revisions are lengthy so will be sent so they can be downloaded from the website until they are in a revised edition of the rules. There's nothing really new, as they just confirm what has already been agreed and put into practice, including anything that is specific to the Olympian Award.

The rules for the provision of classes after status change were clarified as I've already mentioned. The prefix rules too have been dealt with in the breed and registration section.

The one by-law change was returning the number on the Disciplinary Committee from five to nine. This was done as a cost cutting exercise, but was not practical to ensure full attendance, and was thought to be an insufficient number to examine cases with the due care needed.

I think that's covered everything now, but please ask if you want more detail. As you tell we covered a lot, but still managed to be finished shortly after 4.30pm. There were some discussions in which opinions were traded, but nothing that dragged on until tedious or was in any way destructive, as you tell.