

The Electoral Meeting of Council, June 25th 2014

111 delegates arrived in the June sunshine for GCCF's annual Electoral Meeting, its third since the founding of the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy Ltd in 2011. The revised preparations made in the office for getting people signed in, and making sure each delegate had a personal pack of necessary paperwork ensured there was no pre-meeting scrum and delegates moved swiftly through the lobby and into the main hall, greeting friends and catching up on news. They were called to order at 12.15pm by Helen Marriott-Power, the retiring Chairman, and another meeting was underway.

All stood in memory of Michelle Carter, Sharron Fisher, Sylvia Rhead, Majorie Stafford, Frank Wolstenholme and the late GCCF President, Christina Dugdale. The Chairman then paid her friend a very moving tribute that was much appreciated by all who had been privileged to know her.

A PRESIDENT REMEMBERED

Helen regretted the loss of a truly significant figure in the cat fancy, someone who had been a fierce supporter of GCCF and a tireless ambassador on behalf of our organisation. She wasn't a lady who gloried only in past success, but who had wanted the GCCF in the 21st century, being pleased when the company came into being and on learning of the online facilities. She liked to keep abreast of all news and kept in regular contact. Her personal qualities were special too. Someone with a strong sense of justice, but who also had the happy knack of putting people immediately at ease, so warmly remembered by all whose lives she touched.

CLUB BUSINESS

The first business was to ensure clubs who did not have the required number for membership specified in the Byelaws were granted dispensation to retain a delegate with the right to vote. By a majority this was approved for:

- The Bombay & Asian
- Chocolate Pointed Siamese
- Orietal Cinnamon & Fawn
- Oriental Longhair
- Longhair Cream and Blue Cream
- Smoke Cat Society
- Sphynx Cat Association Breed Clubs
- Central Longhair & Semi-Longhair
- Longhaired & Semi-Longhaired
- Old-Style Siamese
- Shorthaired Cat Club of Scotland Special Interest Clubs
- Caesarea
- Jersey Cat Club
- Humberside

- Kensington Area Clubs

Council was also informed of one new club to whom the Board had granted Provisional Membership: the Ocicat Classic Cat Club.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

By dispensation granted this will now take place at the October Council Meeting. Nominations will be taken from clubs so that names can be sent out with the agenda.

ELECTIONS

Prior to the elections taking place a delegate spoke at length about an election candidate who responded, also at length. A proposal was made and discussed by various delegates. The proposal was ultimately withdrawn at the request of the proposer.

Steve Crow was the sole nominee for Chairman and therefore takes this office for the next three years. Both Helen Marriott-Power and John Hansson withdrew from standing as Vice Chairman and so the outcome was as below, with congratulations to Keith.

Vice-Chairman

Keith Scruton 75
Sally Rainbow-Ockwell 36

Other Committees, with reserves shown are on the GCCF website in full, so only the changes are noted below.

GCCF Board of Directors

Helen Marriott Power and John Hansson joined the Board, Shelagh Heavens became a reserve with Catherine Kaye, and Sandra Woodley was not reelected.

Finance Committee

Helen Marriott Power took a place on this committee Shelagh Heavens became reserve and Sally Rainbow-Ockwell was not reelected.

Investigation Committee

Harry Meekings was elected to IC and Claire Lewis became reserve, reversing their 2013 roles.

Disciplinary Committee

Maria Chapman-Ber became a DC member after serving on Appeals for a number of years. Sue Amor became a reserve with newcomers, Sandra Woodley and Nicky Ryan.

Appeals Committee

This was the first year that no one on any other GCCF Committee could serve on Appeals. Betty Shingleton and Jenny Fleming were joined by: Peter Williams, Joyce Green, Carole Pike, Sandra Devereux and Vanessa Marriott.

The complete membership of the GCCF Standing Committees following the elections can be found on the GCCF website: <http://www.gccfcats.org/cttee.html>

SHOW AND BREED NEWS

JUDGE PROMOTION

All judge promotions went ahead. The final additions (not on the published agenda) to the Sphynx list, and a reminder for an extension required for a candidate on the Singapura list were included.

REGISTRATION POLICY

There was some discussion on whether or not LH Exotics should be referred to as Exotic Variants or Persians, but agreed that the requested Exotic BAC policy changes should go ahead. The registration policy could be updated when the BACs responsible for both Persians and Exotics had had an opportunity for joint discussions and determined together the future status of the Exotic Longhairs variants that corresponded genetically to Persians. The representative for the Exotic BAC was asked to communicate the interest of the Persian LH BAC in this respect.

BREED PROMOTIONS

No problem for the Shorthair Somali promotion to Championship status, but the request by the Turkish BAC to promote the Turkish Vankedisi into a single class with the patterned Turkish Van cats did provoke discussion.

Concern was expressed that the patterned cats, who needed very exact markings to do well at shows, could lose out to self cats. However, as the BAC had agreed it as the best (only) way for Turkish to continue being shown with GCCF the decision was in their favour. The Vankedisi will join the Turkish Vans in their bred class from 25th October.

Suffolk (SUF) cats join the GCCF family. These are the Havana Browns and Lilacs of CFA and TICA, but as that name belongs to our Oriental Chocolate self cats it was unavailable and another had to be chosen by the group who wish to register them. That

will happen immediately (or at least as soon as the computer is programmed accordingly).

SHOW RULE CHANGES

Those of you who know the agenda will be aware that there were proposals relating to show structure change. Coventry & Leicester wanted to reverse the agreed change proposed by the Siamese Cat Club in February to allow titled class an option of certificate class. The wording of the rule change necessary for this to happen was on the agenda if this proposal was unsuccessful.

In addition the Birman Cat Club had proposed division of the Olympian Classes into three categories.

All of these were withdrawn as it became clear that Council considered a suggestion that the show structure be reviewed in its entirety was preferable to piecemeal change. This means too that the proposal put by the Siamese Cat Club and agreed in February remains on hold. It was planned that a Working Group drawn from a cross section of Council should be established to consider this, and take soundings from exhibitors, eventually reporting back to Council in February.

The change to the Household Pet Section to remove a class to clarify definitions was agreed after some discussion, as was confirmation that the Ultimate title for HHPs was a club rather than GCCF award and so should not appear on certificates. However, the note concerning bad behaviour at shows was withdrawn for clarification of wording, and the proposal on the right of veto for variant progression was also withdrawn by the proposing club, the Burmese Cat Society.

REPORT ON THE 2014 SUPREME SHOW

The Supreme Show Manager was disappointed. She had hoped to be able to do an overnight set up and achieve cost saving by this. However, a big sponsor would have to pull out if this was done, thus losing more income than would be gained, so it was back to doing things as in the past. There was one change though to encourage exhibitors and it was hoped all delegates would pass this on.

The show's closing date was going to be 7th October. Entries would still have to be received by 24th September, but the change meant any cats with a change of status in the intervening two weeks could notify the Show Manager and their certificate class would be altered to the next level of competition.

GEMS CLARIFICATION

As a matter arising from the previous meeting clarification was sought about the period of transition to the use of GEMS at shows. It was reiterated that would be a time when

Show Teams could accept both, and exhibitors who still used the old code or made mistakes would not be penalised. This was a period of grace when encouragement had to be given to those who wanted to stick within their comfort zone

However, the new system would use GEMs only so it was right to assist people to make the change, and a reminder was given that there was a lot of help on the GCCF website and delegates should pass on this information to committees and club members.

It was confirmed that GEMS was the collective term used for EMS for all breeds recognised by GCCF, but it corresponded exactly with EMS for all breeds, colours and patterns mutually recognized by other registration bodies.

REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS

THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report is available on the GCCF website. It covers many aspects of business progress as well as some of the year's highlights and the company's 2013 accounts. It includes some lovely little cat and people cameo pictures as well, so very easy on the eye, and well worth a look. ([link](#))

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The report of the retiring Chairman, Helen Marriott-Power, was the first of the day, and can be accessed in full ([link](#)). It's important, as all aspects GCCF life over the past year are summarised by someone who has been involved closely, giving lots of time and her using her own talents, as well as being appreciative of the work others have done. From my vantage point at the front of the hall I could sense the respect delegates had for this, and Helen was congratulated by applause both after presenting her report, and in response to Vice-Chairman, Steve Crow's, vote of thanks for her contribution as Chairman to GCCF during her three years in office.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Office Manager, Mark Goadby, presented the financial picture to the end of May. The bad news was that registration numbers are still falling, only about 70% of the total for the same period last year. On the positive side further savings have been made in expenditure and they will be reflected in the next figures issued. Mark's summary was the prediction for a small surplus over the year as whole still holds, though obviously care has to be taken and there's no room for complacency.

IC REPORT

If you haven't had chance to see the agenda or browse the website in this respect it's a good idea to take a look at the IC report. The total number of complaints has come down, 198 this year to over 200 in the three years previous, but the nature of them has changed. Hardly any are now to do with late judge reports, so the system in operation for chasing and using fixed penalties seems to be working, and was refined still further yesterday. The bulk really centre around the point of sale for kittens, with paperwork not being provided or a kitten becoming sick soon after it's rehomed.

Of course, not all complaints are proven, and in the case of paperwork many just need a reminder, but it can quickly be realised why IC wants discussion about vaccination being compulsory, except where mutually agreed not by breeder and new owner. The report concluded that many kittens sold at less than 13 weeks of age, unvaccinated, were suffering significant health issues shortly after sale.

BUSINESS PLAN

Steve Crow gave a brief update on the Business Plan, by summarising which projects were progressing. The major one of renewing and updating the IT system was well on track. HHP registrations were now being taken and the transitions to GEMS was well into the change over period with the introduction into show paperwork at the beginning of the month. Liaison with business partners was ongoing, and funding for business assessment and funding via a government scheme (the Growth Accelerator Programme) had been secured ready to begin work with the new Board.

There was a question, followed by discussion on further liaison with other registering bodies, with agreement that it would be good to have links for show purposes. From this came the suggestion that it would be good to allow people who registered with our competitors one opportunity to try a GCCF show without having to register. Delegates received this idea of 'taster' positively so the Chairman promised it would be explored further.

BREEDER SCHEME

The Breeder Scheme made a good start in its first year and it's encouraging that numbers remain steady. Currently there are 177. Steve explained that the next step was to offer Scheme participants more, and that he would appreciate learning from members what services they would like, and from others what would encourage them to join. The opportunity to show where studs were available was one that was planned. There had been excellent feedback from new owners who had supplied information, which made it all very worth while, and it was also heartening that GCCF had reached a point it taken

the Kennel Club three or four years to achieve.

NEW WEBSITE

However, Rosemary Fisher had to admit that progress on the new website was disappointing. She had hoped to be able to make a presentation, but it had been slow to gather material for upload in the breed sections and so this would have to wait until October. She asked for and obtained volunteers to help with this process so one step in the right direction.

PROJECT PHOENIX REPORT

For the IT update there was a 'Powerpoint' presentation by the Roger Goodwin of Digital Trading Creative on the new system design. He explained that before anything could be built all the functionality of the old had to be thoroughly understood, and as this included feline genetics and the intricacies of breed registration policies it had been somewhat of a baptism of fire. These are not the stuff of the average system designer's life.

However, he had been intrigued by the challenge and felt he was now 'under the many layers of skin' of GCCF. A system could be structured that did the same better and quicker, supporting the office in its daily life, but in addition to that it would provide capability to do far more so the business could be grown and developed for the benefit of all who used it now and attract new clients for the future.

Of course, the immediate question triggered was when would it all become reality. However, until a definite start date was known, depending on Board decisions, and the point in development was reached where testing indicated the sort of problems to be fixed, it was impossible to predict with certainty. Late summer next year would be good, but the autumn was more probable.

AND FINALLY

Unfortunately there was no time for the two discussion projects, but the Chairman promised they would return to the agenda at a future meeting as discussion in Council and within GCCF generally was very important.

The final words of the day went to Steve Parkin in 'Any Other Business' He noted that about a third of the delegates had not attended which he considered disappointing for a major business event.

Also that there had been no mention of the demise of the Notts & Derby Cat Club, a club with a long history and noted for being the first to stage a show in the aftermath of World

War 2. It's sad to have to consider that nothing remains the same forever, which means losses as well as gains, but right too that there should be a record of the passing. It will be minuted. Thanks Steve P.