

THE GENERAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, MARCH 2021 (by videoconference)



Outside March was doing its lion act of howling gales with the occasional lashing downpour, but the weather on the day of the Council meeting mattered not one jot. All delegates were safely in the comfort of their own homes in front of a screen for the first attempt of a GCCF Council meeting by video link.

Did it work? Well, not perfectly, but then what does when it's a first try with rather a lot of unknowns? Yes, in the sense that the technology held up so we could work through the agenda without unplanned intermissions, chaos or too much confusion. True, 'Unmute, unmute' did become the cry of the day, closely followed by, 'Is that your hand up, or is it the fairies?'

PARTICIPATION

Probably the disappointing feature for most was that nearly all participants weren't visible to each other on the screen. The choice of software this time only allowed this for twenty panellists, and that was narrowed down to three or four. The Chairman promised to look at other options, but this package had been chosen because of good interaction facilities, the control allowed to prevent people talking across each other, and the polling facility. Crucially, it allowed for one hundred people to meet, converse, question and vote, all features of a Council meeting.

Near the beginning a delegate wanted to know how many had actually joined in, and the answer was that 98 were present. That crept up to make 99 delegates (including 3 substitutes), one Chairman and one Office Manager, taking it to just over 70% of those who were eligible actively involved. That's a big boost up on February 2020 when there were only 64 delegates, giving more absent than present.

A definite plus for the democratic process and the function of Council, so good indication of the way participation may look in the future. It was queried whether there should be online meetings even when physical meetings are possible again. **As with so much else discussion will have to take place. Just because we can revert to what we did pre-Covid doesn't mean to say we must. If anything it's shown there are options.**

MEETING ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✚ The excellent level of delegate involvement (as above) with there being time for all those who wished to speak to do so,
- ✚ The business as stated on the agenda was done by 5pm. Much of this was administration that needed to be dealt with to allow for elections in 2021, be sure that BACs could continue to function and that no judges were disadvantaged. It wasn't exciting or contentious, but has opened the way for proposals from the clubs that may give new ideas and hot topics next time
- ✚ The voting worked exceptionally well. To be sure we have to learn that it has to be one question at a time, and there may be amendments to any proposal, but once the question was put, and the result displayed, that it allowed for complete anonymity with absolute accuracy and impartiality was beyond doubt. All of those are important because there may now be a voting method for elections that does not require a physical meeting, nor does it mean paying an outside agency a large amount of money.
- ✚ Delegates at last had the chance to question the Chair and Board members on just what they had been doing since February 2020.

THE 2021 ELECTIONS

The GCCF Byelaws are quite specific that Council's Electoral Meeting has to take place in June in London. Yes, that can be changed, but it was a matter of dealing with 2021 first. Delegates were given three choices, and opted to get things back to normal quickly and **hold electronic elections in the summer**.



At an electoral meeting the company's accounts for the previous year have to be presented and examiners appointed for the end of year to come. The suspension of Byelaw 9 made that possible. Also, with **Clubs in mind**, a suspension to part of Byelaw 3 meant that eligibility for delegate representation could be based on 2019 membership numbers rather than those in the 2020 returns, as without a show many area clubs did not have subscriptions. It was acknowledged that this could need to be extended to 2022.

ELECTION FOR A DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE RESERVE

As it happened one election had to be held in March and it was a good test of the polling facility. Instead of opting yes/no/abstain as in other votes. Delegates pressed their choice for the position against the applicants name. This produced a clear result:

Pat Perkins	65%
Anna Virtue	19%
Owen Maudlin	11%
Abstentions	5%

Congratulations to Pat a clear winner, but so also was the software as there had to be no circulation of paper slips and a lengthy counting process to achieve a result.

You may find it interesting to know that electronic election by an outside agency would be almost £5000 this year, a bit more, but not much than hiring the Conway Hall, providing refreshments etc. Zoom software doesn't come free but at just over £1100 (per annum) there's a positive difference from other provision – food for thought.

REPORTS

Apart from the various Byelaw Suspensions and changes that had to be worked through fairly laboriously there were reports on what had been happening in the year, with questions taken.

As would be expected after a whole year has passed the remembrance list was lengthy. So many friends no longer with us. There was customary moment of silence to think of them all.

Elizabeth Aimes, David Bissenden, Sandra Bridges, Betty Brown, Doris Bubb-Porter, Carol Burton, Gordon Butler, Theresa Cook, Averil Dawson, Dee Dewen, Ian Fleming, Anne Ivinson, Lin Jones, David Kinchin, Doreen Lowe, Brenda Leckie, David Shingleton, Chris Stalker, Wendy Wallace, Emma Watts and Joyce Wilcox.

The Judge Training Review Group

Kate Kaye reported that a meeting planned for March 2020 had not gone ahead due to Covid, and since then its leader (Dr Collin) had been extremely busy so that there had been only one meeting, held in October.

At that meeting the chief topic of discussion had been the progress of the Accelerated Scheme since its introduction in 2019 until the cessation of shows in 2020, a period of about nine months. Overall it was felt it was progressing well and there were elements within it that could be applied to a revised training scheme for new judges.

There was some discussion on clause 14 (concerning which classes could be used for tutorials within the Accelerated Scheme) as BACs had interpreted it differently. Kate acknowledged that before definite changes were made they would be proposed to Council

There had also been discussion at the meeting on the need to revise the Judge Appointment Scheme to modernise it, particularly to include the use of modern technology, and incorporate new training procedures. Virtual tutorials and seminars had been discussed and BACs had been consulted on their use.

Kate concluded by noting that the revision to the Business Plan needed a Terms of Reference for the group and that this would be revised, which could bring changes to the group.

There was disappointment expressed by delegates that little progress had been made concerning the training of new judges. It had been anticipated that mention would be made of Judges training by Grand Group in multi-breed sections. KK responded that this had been the topic for March 2020 and acknowledged that little work had been done since, it was something that would be addressed via the revised TOR and some new group members.

A report from the newly formed Show Review Group

The Chair reported that a meeting had taken place to explore the issues and produce a Terms of Reference. It had been hoped that these would be finalised to present to Council, but they were not quite ready. A second meeting was planned before the end of March.

It had been identified that two matters needed to be considered. There were the short term measures that would need to be taken to ensure any safety measures were in place that might be required by Covid legislation still in place and a review of show processes in their entirety to consider general improvements in show format.

These could be termed the tactical and the strategic.

Delegates reported that extensive work had already been carried out by groups interested in both aspects. The results of discussions and surveys carried out were documented and available as a resource. There would not be any need to start again from scratch.

The Chair gave an assurance that all information available would be considered, from groups and individuals. He thanked those who had already done extensive research and concluded the questions by saying he considered the review for shows important and urgent. He said all input would be important and invited direct contact from any groups and individuals.

The Business Plan

Peter Williams reported that he had taken updating the BP in January as Dr Eyres could not continue due to work commitments. His first aim had been to get Terms of Reference for all groups and a status review from them on what was being done. That task hadn't yet been completed, but he wanted to ensure it was so that regular updates could then be made on progress which were then reported to Council via the website, as well as more formally at Council.

He also wanted a strategic meeting to take place shortly to review GCCF's definition and whether there should be additional services alongside the traditional ones of registering pedigree cats, facilitating shows and approving judges. This would include brand recognition for GCCF in the same way as the Kennel Club.

He noted that income for GCCF in 2020 had been exceptional and this provided a once in a life time opportunity to invest in services and give back to cats, breeders and exhibitors.

He believed consultation and involvement of the wider Cat Fancy was also essential. The extended use of videoconference software could possibly provide a means to make this happen.

The Chair gave support to these comments saying that it was important to listen to ideas and adopt new suggestions that were practical. He agreed with a delegate that going forward there was the opportunity to make contact more immediate than going via clubs and AGMs which was a lengthy process, and with the point made by another who stressed the importance of advertising. A new member of staff was being considered who would be tasked with promoting GCCF.

There were also **IT** and **Licensing & Welfare** reports by **Steve Crow** that had been prepared and circulated in advance. There weren't any comments or queries on these at the meeting and as there is plenty of detail they can be found as an addendum to this report rather than summarised within it.

BREED NEWS

No proposals from BACs had been taken for this meeting, but It was reported that their work on **Registration Polices** and **Standards of Points** had been ongoing throughout the year and was continuing. Delegates were reminded that amendments to policies and SOPs was published via the **Electronic Agenda** on the website and that the BACs would be pleased to take comments and queries if the arose.

Those happening through 2020-21 were:

1. **Siberian** Minor registration policy amendment
2. **Oriental Bicolour** SOP - GEMS & pattern description changes
3. **Ragdoll** DNA testing requirements amended & removal of some outdated information
4. **Korat** SOP amendments concerning tabby markings in the coat
5. **Sokoke** SOP amendment on ground colour description & GEMS corrections
6. **Chartreux** SOP re head (detailed), muzzle, ears and coat
Amendments to the Registration Policy on the background of imports
7. **Suffolk** SOP amendments re profile
8. **Norwegian FC** New DNA testing schedules for PKdef & GSD(IV)
9. **Somali** SOP revision re solid (coloured) feet

And finally.....

SPEND FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

If you have ideas for service upgrades or something completely brand new that you think GCCF could offer, the Chair would be delighted for you to be in touch.

[Jen Lacey 16.3 .21](#)

