

THE GENERAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 2020



Given that it was a grey and gloomy day it seems good to start with some of the spring flowers that do colour this month, even though they could well be swamped out in places in this rain-soaked sodden land. Let's take them as well to remember those who couldn't attend the meeting because of illness, and especially for the delegate who was taken ill on the day. A message came through after the event to say that she did reach home safely which was really good news.

Counting up those who attended, those who sent apologies and those who just didn't or couldn't come there were actually more absentees than delegates present. There were twenty more in February 2019, but then the weather was very different and there was no shadow on the horizon of a pandemic with unknown consequences for our hobby and lives in general.

GCCF Vice-President, Eric Wickham-Ruffle had sent good wishes for a productive meeting. He had particularly asked to have news of GCCF, but now finds it very difficult to read it for himself due to his eyesight deterioration. I'm sure those of you who remember Eric will be pleased to know he's been sent a card from the Office to say we are thinking of him, as were our **President, Shirley Bullock, & Vice-President Gordon Butler**.

As always those who would not be joining us again were remembered at the beginning of the meeting. Thankfully there were fewer of them this time. There were a few moments of silence for: **Jo Higgins, Carole Phillips, Eleanor Wexler and Poppy Derrick**

After the Chairman, John Hansson, had opened the meeting at 1.15pm with an **Alleluia** (not sung!), as it was the final time he had to take the Chair, apart from an introductory period in June, there was some discussion about the meeting protocols with which the Board had headed the agenda. The intention was to try and keep a meeting moving, by not allowing any one person to speak frequently and/or at length. A vote agreed that the Board was allowed to introduce such measures as a trial, but the meeting then proceeded much as usual. There were some delegates who spoke a great deal more than others, but the agenda was relatively short and several items did not spark much discussion so there was the luxury of time for all comment.

BYELAW CHANGE.....

Additional wording to Byelaw 9 (4) had been proposed again after deferment in October because it didn't cover all circumstances. Its intention was much the same as the meeting protocols – to help the meeting run more smoothly. It was hoped that if delegates had lengthy statements on any agenda item these could be published in advance of the meeting, so giving all delegates an opportunity to consider them thoroughly. In addition, knowing what was coming in advance, would allow proper opportunity for the right of reply.

An objection was raised that the printed supplementary agenda was not available until the day of the meeting, with the response that electronic publication would be shortly after receipt, and delegates could be informed of new paperwork by email. They would have far more time for consideration than if a lengthy statement was read from the floor at Council.

After a typographical correction a vote was taken which showed only three against, which gave well over the two thirds majority required for a Byelaw change. Now to see if it works, but as with any change it can always be modified later if unforeseen problems occur.

.....AND RULE CHANGE DISCUSSIONS

Prefixes

With twelve abstentions it was agreed that **new prefixes should not include GCCF Breed names or be a prefix owned by another breeder**, as a sole word or linked by punctuation to any other word. There was concern that this referred to cats' names after the prefix, but it was stressed it applied only to prefixes. Names could continue to be used in exactly the same way as previously.

It's not surprising there was confusion as prefixes are covered by **Rule Section 1:11**, and not 1:7 as printed. Rule 1:7 does concerns names! A correction will have to be made, but the Board has been monitoring for this type of use in new applications, and will continue to do so. Prefixes are accepted at the Board's discretion, and the additional wording had been added for clarity.

Prefix applications and club membership

The Midlands Counties Cat Club proposal in October that prefix applicants should be breed club members had been returned to the club and Board for further consideration. The Board had brought this forward again, suggesting area and breed clubs that were relevant to the applicant. However, problems were pointed out with this, as it could be difficult to define an area and/or some area clubs did not want the responsibility for mentoring.

It was agreed it should go back to see if the club had had any further thoughts. Breed club membership is required for the Breeder Scheme. Possibly it's no longer so relevant for a prefix which is purchased ahead of a serious breeding commitment which should be welcomed. Kittens with a breeder owned prefix rather than an administrative one are more readily identifiable and linked back to their breeder which would seem to be a positive attribute.

BREED AND SHOW NEWS

Breed Applications



The **Lykoi** has progressed within GCCF. A unanimous decision means it has preliminary status and will go into its own assessment classes in Section 4B. These can be offered at shows not yet closed at the discretion of the show management and will have to be in schedules from the end of June 2020. Its striking appearance, and unusual coat are breed features due to specific genetic mutations that have been identified and do not impact on health or welfare. Look out for 'weird and wonderful' on the show bench shortly!

The Breeder Group Secretary was contacted to give the Council's decision. She responded with a brief message which says it all:

Thank you, thank you, thank you to GCCF

Oriental Whites have also made it into assessment classes. They are there as a new colour of an existing breed, and can be green eyed, odd eyed or blue eyed. It was concern that the blue eyed were almost identical to the Foreign Whites that provoked the most discussion. Assurance was given by the Oriental Joint BAC that the revised registration policies for the Foreign White and Oriental Shorthair required DNA testing and the cats would be registered accordingly. The breeders of these white cats will have to be knowledgeable and dedicated!





The STAR of this section of the Council report just has to go to the **Red Series Abyssinians**. The reds, creams and torties of the Aby world (previously known as the sex-linked colours) have been at assessment level for about 40, yes FORTY, years. At February Council 2020 they finally stepped up and achieved **CHAMPIONSHIP STATUS**.



They will have their own breed class, separate from the other Aby classes and these can be offered by any show not yet closed and must be in schedules by the end of June.

With the fascinating Lykoi, and new colours to meet in Aby and Oriental classes there should certainly be newcomers on the show bench this spring and summer, with the best having time to get themselves qualified for the **Supreme Show** in October.

Standards of Points

The **Persian Longhair** SOP had been amended in respect of the **Shaded Cameo and White Persian**. The section on the nose leather for both the black shaded and the blue shaded allowed for a variation in nose leather colour with an outline if the surrounding fur was white. This was to resolve the issue of a place on the show bench for pewter and white Persians. The revision was agreed unanimously.



Judges and Judge Training

All judge appointments proposed by BACs were confirmed by Council. That included reinstatement to two lists for a judge who had previously withdrawn. It was decided as a point of principle that judges who had withdrawn/retired could return to judging at the discretion of the relevant BACs. All judges who were full on at least one list in Section 4 (with the exception of those who were emeritus) would be added to form the Lykoi list if they had not opted out when invited to do so. Earlier in the afternoon it had been agreed that the rule that allowed for this full coverage of judges would not be extended to the Nebelung, Sokoke and Toyger as it would be taking action retrospectively and these breeds were already engaged with the list of judges they had appointed.

No report was given on behalf of the **Judge Training Review Group** as its next meeting was planned for March. It was expected that updates would then put onto the website. Peter Collin had expressed a willingness to take questions and it was noted that tutorials needed more thorough guidance as cat were being over-handled.

Three revisions to the **GCCF Judge Appointment Scheme** were proposed:

- ✚ The revised **Stewarding Scheme** had been presented to the October Council meeting, and it was a matter of confirming the wording. Approval was unanimous.
- ✚ The second revision allowed BACs to have **electronic meetings**. There was some discussion on whether there should more definition of the electronic format, but when it was confirmed that this was to enable BACs to operate electronically if they so wished, and it was not compulsory for any BAC to do so, there was majority approval. (1 against 4 abstentions)
- ✚ The proposal for a **standardised quorum** of just six was withdrawn. It was agreed this should be returned to the Board for a percentage to be inserted for BACs with a large number of constituent clubs.

The Supreme Show 2019 & 2020 Supreme Show Plans

The accounts for the 2019 show had been presented by the GCCF's bookkeeper with a direct comparison made to the previous year. It was noted that there had not been so much advertising and public attendance had dropped, but as GCCF had promoted the Supreme directly, and bookings and ticket sales had not been able to start so early, it was thought difficult to attribute direct cause and effect.

The 2020 show was planned for 24 October 2020 and would be in halls 4 & 5 at the NEC. That would allow for undercover parking and be nearer the main concourse for the possibility of additional footfall. The judges had been invited, but classes had not yet been allocated.

World Cat Congress

The Chairman said he had done what he could to get the event off the ground, with the NEC booked and a suitable hotel/conference venue found. There were others willing to assist, but what was needed now was an overall organiser. Kate Kaye said she had experience in this area and was prepared to take on the role.

There was some discussion on whether cats from other registries would attend the back to back two certificate show, with the conclusion that there probably would not be many, but a few might be interested. It was thought that there was already a form of show registration set up for this purpose on a previous occasion. Discussion then centred on whether the 13 day rule could be enforced. At the time several commented it would be difficult to manage, but afterwards it was established that appropriate checks could be made. All exhibitors will be required to sign the declaration that incorporates the 13 day rule and the fixed penalty will be applied to any exhibitor who does not comply which would result in a loss of entry fees and disqualification from awards won. If the attention of non-GCCF exhibitors is drawn to this, hopefully it will provide a sufficient deterrent.

The circulation of show paperwork to show managers.

The Gwynedd and Shropshire Clubs had asked for this proposal to be presented, but unfortunately their delegates were unable to attend. In some preliminary discussion it was acknowledged that some people wanted information on paper, but not all would. There would have to be choices. Also mentioned was that judges and judge eligibility could change on a weekly basis, and although some clubs were fortunate in retaining traditional dates and venues over many years not all could do so. Those that had to make changes usually had good reasons, making it difficult to be fair, though this was always the intention. Clubs could make objections that would be considered as part of the overall picture. There were no conclusions as the Chairman directed this item should be discussed again in June when the Shropshire and Gwynedd delegates could be present.

BUSINESS REPORTS

Business Plan

Gavin Eyres had sent a brief introduction as he was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. It was read by the Chairman, drawing attention to the fact that project managers would be able to give updates in their particular areas, and to the new projects for the year.

Additional projects were not requested at this time, but it was commented that a member of the Board rather than the Office Manager should lead on increasing registrations and transfers. Also requested were the addition of 'key performance indicators' and project costing estimates that were budgeted.

IT

Steve Crow described the current IT staffing arrangements, and hoped that as Caroline Turner-Russell had recently been employed as a business systems analyst projects could move forward. To date it had been mostly stabilisation of the system, but with the release of the third tranche of fixes and improvements it was time to make progress with planned projects. Initially, Caroline would be supporting STAR going live from June 2020. The manual had been completed and was being tested. She would also be working on ensuring the breed registration policies were on the system in the latest form and could function as intended by the respective BACs. There were ideas for other projects, but these needed to be the priorities.

Partnerships

John Hansson reported that meetings with Agria and Royal Canin were planned for March and there would be news when those had taken place.

The amount of excess charged by Agria was queried from the floor. The Chairman replied that it was Agria's business decision rather than a GCCF policy, but the question would be put to the company.

Licensing & Welfare

Steve's other report of the afternoon was described by one delegate as the most important item of the day. He gave his usual thorough update on the work of the Canine and Feline Sector Group. This was consultative to Defra, but with a change of government it possibly wouldn't continue in its current form.

- ✚ He remarked on the impact that **licensing** had had on puppy registration numbers. It was believed a number who bred only in a small way were giving up the hobby. Fortunately, at present GCCF was not similarly affected.
- ✚ **The Cat Breeding Code of Practice** was close to completion.
- ✚ A report on **the compulsory microchipping of all cats** was with Defra. The difficulties for enforcing such a policy had been highlighted.
- ✚ A report had been made on the **conformation** of dogs and a committee to produce a similar report on cats was now established, with SC representing GCCF.
- ✚ **The Welsh Government** had finished its consultation on animal exhibitions and had stated legislation wasn't intended to cover the hobby showing of domestic pets.
- ✚ The **ban on third party sales** of puppies and kittens would be effective from 1 April
- ✚ **Increased sentences for animal cruelty** were still at the discussion stage without a timescale, but had champions to take a bill through both houses of parliament.
- ✚ It was probable that **Pet Passports** for the EU would finish at the end of the year and the UK would have third party status with EU. countries

FINAL DISCUSSION – membership of GCCF going forward

It was put forward for discussion that the federation of clubs that formed GCCF and had seen it through the 20th century was now outdated. Club membership no longer connected people to GCCF and gave them representation. This was evidenced in the number of clubs having to seek dispensation to attend Council, the low delegate turn out for meetings, and the scarcity of volunteers in all areas. Times had changed! It was perhaps time for a different form of connection between GCCF and customers, with clubs having a separate and different function.

It was stated that to go anywhere it needed a group to identify the problems, bring forward options and consult on them. It was agreed that the Board should begin the discussion.

[Jen Lacey 27.2.2020](#)

