

THE GENERAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, OCTOBER 2019



75 delegates gathered for the October 2019 meeting of Council and John Hansson opened the meeting at quarter past one, to give time for any late arrivals as the hall was by no means full. As always there were some friends to remember and a moment of silence was kept for:

Ivor Biggs, Irene Cox , Gail Miller, Ann Mott, Richard Mycock, Mick Pummel, Bob Seamoss, Linda Ward and Ted Wilding.

It was not a lengthy agenda which gave the opportunity for some interesting discussions, on items designated for that purpose and in debates on rule and byelaw change. The outcome of a few of these was to defer the item back to the proposing club or the Board for further thought and/or better wording.

As well as these there was the usual breed business, judges to promote, a new club to welcome as a GCCF Full Member and news and updates on various happenings. Pride of place for these will have to be given to Steve Crow's detailed news of how the powers that be (local and national) are getting more interested in our hobby. As he succinctly expressed it:

Animal Welfare is moving up the political agenda.

That means 'control' as far as breeding and showing are concerned, rather than protection.

RULE CHANGE.....

BREEDER ALERT!

Section 1 Rule 10 details what the processes GCCF breeders should follow when selling a kitten they have advertised as a pedigree.

10bi is specifically concerned with **transfer of ownership**.

Today there was a change to ensure **new owners get the paperwork to make a transfer at the time a cat or kitten is sold. It should not be withheld until proof of neutering or for any other reason.**

There was unanimous agreement that there is no valid reason to withhold transfer of ownership. Cats that are intended as pets should be registered as non-active which will ensure no progeny can be GCCF registered. Breeders also have the option of early neutering and/or ensuring kittens are sold with a contract which can include an undertaking to neuter.

Tip from a delegate: set a penalty clause of several £thousand for breach of any commitment to neuter or breeding without the consent of the original breeder. She knew someone who had sued successfully for a large amount of money in these circumstances.

There is a very straightforward GCCF sample contract for an undertaking to neuter that can be downloaded from the website here:

<https://www.gccfcats.org/Portals/0/Kitten%20Agreement.pdf>

OTHER RULE & BYELAW CHANGES

There were three other proposals and all were deferred:

- ✚ Paperwork to be circulated to Council (Byelaw) – further consideration needed as it did not cover all circumstances
- ✚ A decision on judges for breeds at preliminary status was held over until the next meeting as the proposer was not present to answer queries raised.
- ✚ **The Midland Counties Cat Club** proposal that prefix applicants should be breed club members was thought not to cover all the issues as it was worded at present.

This last one brought about one of the most interesting debates of the afternoon. It looked a very simple matter of a small word change on paper, with the rationale given that specialist breed clubs are better placed than area clubs to advise and guide new breeder, and more likely to make prefix applicants wait a little while so that their breeding practices could be assessed.

Several delegates spoke in support of the proposal and described the mentoring given by their breed club to new breeders. However, a delegate from Scotland pointed out that area clubs in the more remote parts of the country were often better placed to know their members than breed club committees who may not even be aware of the existence of the place where they lived. Also, there was an eloquent plea to be inclusive of new people rather than erect barriers in their path or they would turn away from a GCCF. A prefix application was evidence of commitment and should be welcomed. There was some concern that prefixes were used to market kittens and were obtained for this purpose, though it was pointed out that kittens whose owner did not own a prefix received an administrative one and buyers would not know the difference.

Two additional important points were that the wording of the rule did not stipulate any length of time for membership of a club. Also, that difficulties were created for new people and Office staff administering prefix applications if the GCCF rules set out the criteria required for prefix applications, but clubs added other before they would confirm membership.

The conclusion was unanimous approval for referring the proposal back to Midland Counties CC and the Board. There seemed to be consensus for more carefully defined GCCF rules that were then applicable to all prefix applicants.

ELECTION FOR TWO MEMBERS OF THE APPEALS COMMITTEE

Maria Chapman and Vanessa Marriott had both come to the end of their term on the Appeals Committee and Vanessa had chosen not to stand again. There were four interested in the two vacant places, with two reserves also required. Their written applications were available to delegates and had been published on the GCCF website. The result of the paper ballot was:

Maria Chapman-Beer (68) and **Carolyn Kempe** (34) are both now AC members until October 2022. **Alison Reynolds** (18) and **David Lee** (12) are both now reserves until October 2019.

CLUB NEWS

The **Bengal Cat Association** had been unsuccessful in their application for full GCCF membership in June, but had now made the necessary adjustments and their application was approved by a large majority.



Council was informed that the Aztec Cat Club was now the **Aztec and Ocicat Society**. The Board had approved change as the club wished to show it catered for both of the breed's patterns.

Shelagh Heavens gave an update on **club returns** and said she'd managed to extract completed returns and subscriptions from 104 of the 105 clubs due to make them. She received a round of applause for outstanding success in this mammoth task, and thanks from the Chair.

However, then came the warning that clubs shouldn't rest on their laurels. **Completion by the end of April had to become normal practice, and if clubs did not want to lose their delegate to Council and/or their show they needed to start work as soon as possible after the year end.** Those who had defaulted this year, especially would not be getting second chances and lots of chasing in 2020. Shelagh did mitigate the severity of this though by saying that she would always help any club with problems. She just needed to be told what these were, and at the earliest possible opportunity rather than after the deadline.

BREED AND SHOW NEWS

Breed Application



There will be new kids on the show bench block shortly as **Snow Toygers** will be joining their Brown Tabby brethren in the assessment class. It was queried how these originated as they weren't recognised in other organisations and thought most probably via the Bengals as they were prevalent from the early generations.

There were a revised Toyger registration policy and SOP to include the snow patterns. Outcrossing to Bengals is to be allowed for a limited period to ensure a sufficient number of lines include cs and bs to secure sound genetic health for the snow patterns.

Registration Policies



The changes to the **Burmese** registration policy were for clarification only. GEMS code had replaced the old numbering and irrelevant clause had been deleted. Also, the information supplied on DNA testing for import had been brought up to date, but there were no changes that would affect most GCCF breeders.

By contrast the **Snowshoe** policy had undergone a major revision, clarifying the frequency of permitted outcrosses and the use in breeding of SNO other than 05. This was with the intention of ensuring all SNO 05 achieve a show bench place regardless of a single outcross to another breed or other non-show patterns within any of the three previous generations. In addition new DNA testing schemes were included for some outcrosses and all imports.

Snowshoe breeders: make sure you get an up to date copy of the policy and contact your club/BAC if you need to learn more.



The **Manx** policy was something of a work in progress, but had had its breed numbering updated to GEMS and included the use of foundation cats from the Isle of Man rather than British Shorthairs as the permitted outcross. As these cats would not be registered it had been decided to include GCCF rule 12 cii) to allow good quality progeny to progress to the supplementary register via exhibition with critique classes.

Standards of Points

The **Snowshoe** SOP now used GEMS and had very minor amendments otherwise.

In the **Van Pattern Bi-colour British Shorthair** SOP the description of the coat colour had been extensively revised, particularly in respect of the head markings, and there is now some allowance for a very small amount of colour on the body. These changes should allow more cats to make a show bench appearance.

The Supreme Show

The accounts for the 2018 show had been presented with greater detail as requested in June and, other than the need to correct the name of the magazine used for advertising, no other amendments were requested. It was acknowledged that headings from 'Quickbooks' would be available for future use.

Plans for the 2019 event were now finalised. It was announced that just a few more cats would be present this year, with 609 in total and 560 in competition. There had been the opportunity to take only space to be used so there would be an overall saving on hall hire.

Judge Training Review Group

As Peter Collin was unable to be present there wasn't a report. It was noted that the 'Accelerated Scheme' which had brought into being Provisional Full Judges was now operational and that judge and BACs had received all the necessary paperwork as planned. It was queried whether there would be a review of this for future use, but thought that training via Grand Group would obviate the need for it in future, though as yet there was no date set. It was planned that a newly formed working group would get to work on this shortly.

The World Cat Congress

This was tentatively fixed for the last Saturday in October in 2021, though John Hansson warned that this could be changed as there was a possible show partner for the future that could want to be involved. It was observed that until there was a date and venue it was difficult to book speakers and make definite arrangements for the event. It was hoped that the seminar speakers would be from the UK to save on travel costs and a further suggestion was noted.

Section Hopping

This was another of those interesting discussions that brought the meeting alive. There was an impassioned plea from some of those regularly showing household pets that the loophole that allowed people with pedigree cats to go back and forth between the Pedigree and Pedigree Pet Sections should be closed. There was no problem if it occurred just the once when exhibitors were deciding which was the most appropriate for their cat but once was enough. There was support for this from those who remembered the Pedigree pet Section coming into being and believed this was always the intention although it had never been written into the rules.

There was acknowledgement that people wanted to support their local shows, but stated that there were other ways this could be done – from a straightforward donation to using exhibition with critique classes. In conclusion there was plenty of support from the floor for the Board looking into the issue and proposing new rules.

BUSINESS & REPORTS

IT

Steve Crow spoke briefly to report that the third tranche of updates would be completed shortly. It had taken longer than expected as GCCF now had part time rather than full time support and some of the fixes required extensive technical testing. It was planned that STAR would go live from June 2020 and the manuals for Show Manager and Office use were now almost completed.

Partnerships

John Hansson mentioned that Royal Canin voucher could be used for 20% off all purchases at shows, but had to acknowledge this didn't mean much if the show price already had 20% discount as there was no double reduction.

The exciting news was that **AGRIA would be launching a new initiative at the Supreme aimed at giving breeders who issue the five week cover notes a little extra back.** There would also be an Agria advert in catalogues. He urged those present to continue supporting the partnership as GCCF gained a lot that would be very difficult to replace when it came to an end.

Licensing & Welfare

Steve had several items to report as a lot was happening at the moment with a number of proposals and discussions regarding further regulation relating to cats, breeding and showing.

- ✚ It was disappointing that **local authorities were not respecting the Defra Guidance when it came to licensing**, claiming that breeders were running a business when they were not, or applying the dog breeding schedule, rather than that for pet vending. The KC had reported similar issue and the Chairman of the Canine & Feline Sector Group would raise them at ministerial level at the next meeting with Defra.
- ✚ **The Welsh Government was proposing to licence shows and exhibitors.** There was consultation on this at present, and GCCF had contributed, but it seemed poorly thought through and difficult to implement so was unlikely to come to anything this time. However, there were others who could be encouraged to take action in future.
- ✚ There was now a **call for evidence on the compulsory microchipping of all cats**, with views to be expressed by 2020. As Steve had been invited to join a C&FS sub-group on this GCCF would have extremely useful representation.
- ✚ The **Kitten Checklist** had been launched on 24 September and was on the GCCF website. It had to be remembered that this was put together in conjunction with 20 partners so GCCF's was not the only voice. Our rules and Code of Ethics raise the bar.
- ✚ The first draft on **Code of Practice on Cat Breeding** was complete and with Defra for input. Steve had written this in conjunction with ICC and Cats Protection, but expected it to be altered.
- ✚ GCCF had been invited to a round table discussion regarding the possibility of introducing **regulation in the cat, dog and equine rescue and rehoming sanctuary sector.** These take place on the 23rd Oct in Bristol and 28th Oct in Crewe and it was expected that there would be GCCF representation at both events

- 🌈 Recent information was that the Government had asked 23Red, a PR company, to design **a campaign on Brexit & travel**. Part of this would focus on pet travel and 23Red have requested support from members of CFSG, asking for key partners to help them engage the public & stakeholders in the messaging by sharing the campaign. Another one to watch!

The positive ending? In a discussion on whether the number of Council meeting should be reduced most delegates who spoke were against the idea as the meetings gave the opportunity for opinion to be expressed – voices to be heard, votes to count.

And we finished ten minutes ahead of schedule!

[Jen Lacey 17.10.2019](#)