

THE GENERAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, FEBRUARY 2019

Another balmy February day, really too nice to be indoors, but the GCCF Chairman & Vice Chairman and 87 delegates duly reported into the Conway Hall for another Council meeting. The Chairman, John Hansson, called the meeting to order at 1.10pm and welcomed delegates. In the established tradition he read out the names of the friends who had passed on since October. **Ron Darby, Angie Christoffersen, Lynn Dixon, Barbara Harrington, Marie Midgley, Judy Potter, Brian Pring, Sylvia Pritchett and Lady Patsy Yardley** were all remembered in a moment of silence.

Then to the first business of the day after apologies and warm good wishes passed on from Vice-President, Eric Wickham-Ruffle. This was the introduction of the **Office Manager**, Denise Williams, who was welcomed by delegates. She promised to try and follow the meeting proceedings, but hoped to be allowed a while to settle in and learn - maybe for three years!

This really was the meeting of show business. There were several proposals for show rule changes to debate, and various suggestions for discussion and the introduction of the Accelerated Scheme to make a spread of more experienced judges across breed lists and give show managers a wider pool to judge Imperial and Grand Classes.

The Supreme & WCC Events



Decisions made on the on the Supreme show were probably the most important. By a large majority (just 5 against and 12 abstaining) it was agreed that the 2019 Supreme should go ahead on 26 October in the usual halls at the NEC. It was also determined, with even more in favour, that there should be a show in 2020 as well, although there was no fixed date and venue, just a decision that planning for it should begin at the next Council meeting, if not earlier

As there is very little time this year to make changes the 2019 Supreme will be very much as the 2018 Supreme, though negotiations are ongoing with the NEC for a reduced amount of space within the halls to cut hire costs. For the future, perhaps a two day show, or the use of single pens for kittens, or all who want them (to save space). Qualifications for entry for all that depend on achievements within the previous season was another suggestion put forward to make a restricted entry competitive and present the public with exceptional cats. There was a feeling that an extra sparkle was needed.

From a summary given for the bottom line of the 2018 Supreme accounts it was clear that the show had to be considered in terms of promotion of GCCF and a show case for our breeds. Steve Crow had hoped for a reduced loss on the previous year, and was optimistic in October that this aim would be fulfilled, but commission on ticket sales and having to pay VAT on all entry fees had reduced the anticipated income, and several miscellaneous expenses had to be met, leaving the total cost for the year at £24,800.

The GCCF is responsible for the **World Cat Congress** in 2021 to celebrate 150 years since the first cat show. The Chairman reported he was in consultation with other WCC members to get a date fixed, and possibly to offer a combined show, and that savings were already being made into an interest bearing deposit account on a monthly basis to finance the event.

Show Rule Changes

There were four proposed, but just one approved. The Oriental CA's revision of the BIS winner additional certificate award was well liked and thought timely. In future, if the Overall BIS winner is at Olympian level the additional certificate awarded will be an all-breed Olympian if the show is an all-breed, and a breed Olympian if it's a breed show, both at the level the cat is working towards. At present Olympian-aiming OBIS winners have been restricted to breed show Olympians. It was hoped that the rule could be put into effect immediately, but Denise would make a check on the Office process to ensure there would be no problems with the implementation.

The rule changes regarding vaccinations proposed by the Veterinary Advisory Committee and the Oriental CA were withdrawn, as was the OCA's proposed rise in the age at which kittens could be at their first show. It was requested that a vet should be present at the next meeting to go through the rule changes, and thinking behind amendments, as it was felt they did not relate directly to the ABCD guidelines (as indicated by the web link provided). If exhibitors and vets were not on the same wavelength it would add to the confusion it was felt already existed.

There was concern too that if it was thought unsafe for kittens to be at a show until 21 days following a completed vaccination course it indicated that there should be the same period before they left home. Giving a mixed message was less than satisfactory, and there was also concern that some show experience at an earlier age helped kittens accept the circumstances and develop positive show temperaments. It was wondered just how much evidence there was for very young kittens becoming ill after a show, and whether it was actually disproportionate to the relatively low number overall.

In discussion it was agreed that the rules should be more explicit in **banning exhibitors from using all types of sprays in the show hall**. The problem was that any use could affect neighbouring cats as well as the exhibit they were intended for, and sometime with an extreme adverse reaction that could impact on the cat's general welfare and/or its temperament.

If there was this level of stress it then became a safety issue, as judges and stewards were at risk of being bitten. Therefore it was felt a complete ban stated explicitly (as was already done in some schedules) should be a matter of rule as soon as possible. This would be referred to the Board as a matter of urgency.

There were other suggestions made in discussion that it was thought were worth further consideration. The idea of a Junior Warrant certificate was liked by some to encourage the number of adolescent cats shown. An extension of the number of Grands required to five before the cat progressed to Imperial level had some merit as it would mean that cats competing at the higher level were more likely to be mature.

Judges and Stewards

All judge promotions, appointments, extensions and withdrawals were approved as listed.

The completed and awaited **Accelerated Judge Scheme** and **revised eligibility** for higher awards were approved following a presentation by Peter Collin. Judges in multi breed sections need no longer be able to judge all the Grand Classes, but two of three (sections 2 and 4). Judges not judging breed lists but eligible for Grands and/or Imperials will be on the breed lists they are not currently qualified as Full Judges provisionally (F(P)), unless they opt out. This will be implemented as soon as possible. Judges should expect individual letters to explain to them how the changes apply and what action should be taken. Over this period it should be possible to draw up and publish new lists for Show Management.

A **revised stewarding scheme** that injects more constructive learning into the process was presented by Kate Kaye. As well as training in the presentation and handling of exhibits at level one, for the first time stewards will be guided in writing reports when at level two and working with their chosen BAC. There will also be online questionnaires devised with multi choice questions to confirm understanding of show procedures. It will be implemented as soon as is practical.

Breed updates



There were no new breeds introduced or breed promotions this time. Two registration polices, the **Russian** and **Chartreux** had short amendments concerning imports that were unanimously approved. The Russian BAC wanted to ensure that anyone importing a neutered Russian cat would not have to undertake the rigorous DNA testing requirements that were important for cats that could be bred from, and the Chartreux breeders wished to stipulate that foundation cats for outcross purposes originated in France.



Changes to the **Lilac Point Siamese** SOP enjoyed the same level of support, after a succinct explanation that the purpose of the revised standard was to make a clear distinction between the Lilac Point and the Caramel Point. It was hoped that as well as guiding judges it would encourage breeders to register correctly. There was some comment that Oriental clubs might like to consider similar amendments.

Delegates were also very supportive of a Board suggestion added to the supplementary agenda that will apply to all breeds. At present those who import a cat that is already registered must supply a certified pedigree of the required number of generations as an original paper document, signed and stamped by the registering authority. A copy, whether on paper or by electronic has not previously been permitted because there is a risk of alteration. However, it was thought that [a pdf sent straight from the other registering body directly to the GCCF Office](#) would provide the same level of security as a paper original, as well as being far quicker and avoiding postal inefficiencies.

With Council's approval the Board will decide on wording for a rule addition to enable this at its next meeting on 5 March and then publish it on the website. That will ensure that implementation of the decision can be as swift and streamlined as possible, and those importing can make appropriate arrangements if they so wish.

Club Matters

There was a Byelaw change to allow **GCCF membership** (provisional and full) to new clubs formed to support a new breed with a minimum membership of 20 rather than 50. It was stressed that this change applied only to the first club to represent the breed and at the point of application only. There was no membership level for existing clubs fixed in the byelaws for continued membership, only for delegate representation.

The issue of allowing a breed club with BAC representation to change its status to all breed for the purpose of running an all-breed show was much less clear cut. It was understood that small clubs struggled to maintain a sufficient level of membership and funds to continue, but the show calendar was already crowded and BACs needed club support. It was thought a matter for the Board to discuss in more depth.

A specialist club that had changed status had now had a name change to shorten its rather unwieldy title - welcome the **Central All Breed Cat Club**. That should make its show certificate writers' job a bit easier!

Finally a reminder was given that **Club Returns** were due by 1 May. If clubs did not make these on time (or explain a reason for the delay) they put both their future delegate representation and show licences at risk.

Council Reports

The one piece of **financial news** was that the company's accounts were now with Monahans and this year a full audit would be conducted. A number of years had passed since the previous audit (at the point GCCF became a company) and there had been a number of staff changes during the year. It would be more expensive than an examination, but was a more rigorous process and best practice in the circumstances.

Steve Crow had taken over as Board lead on **IT** and gave the main aims for the year as system stabilisation and consolidating on the changes that had been put into place, so that the IT resources GCCF now had could be used most effectively.

He hoped that the **STAR show services** could be offered as a costed system, making a small return for GCCF, by the beginning of the new show year, but acknowledged this was a target date as there were still a number of problems to be resolved. He would be able to be more definite after an IT Group meeting at the end of following month. In response to queries it was confirmed that show returns could not yet be entered online, and that Mrs Rainbow-Ockwell had now resigned from her voluntary role as IT Project Manager. It was hoped that rather than continue to employ a dedicated programmer a new staff member for support and development could be found and employed for two days a week. This would reduce costs considerably.

Steve also gave the update on news from the **Canine & Feline Sector Group**. At present there seemed few queries concerned with licensing and discussion within the group focused mostly on changes that Brexit could bring. There was concern particularly for the consequences of a sudden no deal as in addition to animal travel the import of veterinary medicines and anaesthetics was thought to be at risk. The concentration on the B issue within DEFRA had also delayed legislation on third party puppy and kitten sales and even the launch of the Kitten Checklist as it was hoped this would be done with DEFRA support.

The Chairman reported that there was little news from the GCCF **commercial partnerships**. Agria had reported a slight drop in business, but still contributed massively financially speaking to GCCF. Without that income stream the company would need a complete rethink on future spending. There had not been much recent discussion with Royal Canin, but it had been made clear that its support of the Supreme depended on the show being at the NEC.

Any other business: delegates were taken back to shows as there was concern expressed over exhibitors leaving shows early (there were sanctions in place that could be used, but exhibitors needed to be reminded); and that the amount of bedding used in some pens was a safety issue. It was confirmed that this was already on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

.....And the Positive finish: No conclusion is possible without mention of the thanks expressed during the course of the meeting for the voluntary support given to the Office by **Rosemary Fisher** and **Caroline Turner-Russell** over the past two months to keep GCCF services functioning effectively, and in training the new Office Manager into all things GCCF. Also, to **Sally Rainbow-Ockwell** for her role in getting the computer system (Phoenix) up and running, and continuing in her position as Project Manager pro bono for the next eighteen months to oversee continued development. Gifts of time and expertise are an invaluable resource.



Jen Lacey 28.2. 2019