

## THE ELECTORAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, JUNE 2018

There were 100 delegates present at this meeting. That's roughly two thirds of those who could have attended and, additionally, some clubs who were eligible to have representation chose not to do so. However, there were some new delegates present, and once **the Suffolk Breed Club was welcomed as a new Full Member of GCCF** they had a delegate ready to participate as soon as their membership was formally approved.

The agenda for the meeting was not a long one, and gave time for some in depth consideration of some topics, most notably the accounts as a number of delegates had questions to raise and points to make. By 5pm all items had been discussed and business concluded and those who wished to contribute on any business had had an opportunity to do so.

For once there were no rule changes to debate, and the byelaw changes proposed by the Board were returned to it for further consideration. Delegate comment intimated that changes to the first two were not relevant, but the scope of third needed to be widened. The **byelaw change proposed by the Progressive Singapura Cat Club** which restricted the period a delegate could serve to nine consecutive years received only one vote in favour. The chief concerns expressed were loss of knowledge and experience, and that delegate choice was a matter for individual clubs that should not have restrictions imposed upon it.

**Judith Picknell** and **Sheila Webb** were remembered in a moment of silence.

### Elections

It was the electoral meeting and the elections were the main feature of the day. Before they began there was an unpleasant moment when it was suggested by one delegate that the staff who had attended from the Bridgwater office were not competent, and/or could not be trusted, to carry out the counting of votes unsupervised.

This was undoubtedly the low point of the day. The Chairman referred to the byelaw which gave him authority to appoint scrutineers and praised the staff for their commitment through a difficult period recently. The Vice-Chair backed this, describing staff members as **GCCF's most valuable asset**. It was clear there was plenty of support for these observations.

Results:

### **The Board of Directors**

Peter Collin (59), Shelagh Heavens (53), Rosemary Fisher (52), Valerie Anderson (45), Sarndra Devereux (40), Kate Kaye (40), Lyndsey Robinson (35), Vanessa Marriott (33) and Sandra Woodley (28).

In the tie-breaker ballot for the fifth position Sarndra and Kate had a 50/50 split again. They agreed with the Chairman at the tea-break that Kate should take the position, but Sarndra should attend if Kate could not.

The five newly appointed Directors were elected for a three year period.

## Finance Committee

Maria Chapman-Beer (80), Shelagh Heavens (68), Steve Crow (65), Tommy Goss (56), and Rosemary Fisher (54), with Kit Game (52) as reserve

There was a view put forward that seemed not to be widely shared that the Finance Committee was no longer useful as the Directors were legally responsible for financial control. Possibly this will be discussed further if a Financial Controller can be appointed as a staff member. There has been no luck with recruitment so far.

## Disciplinary Committee

Just two were needed for DC from the six applicants. Those appointed were Stephen McConnell (57) and Julia Craig McFeely (53). They will serve for a three year period. However DC is Committee that draws upon its reserves whenever members are unable to attend and Judy Emmens (40) and Steven Abrahams (37) were elected.

## Investigations Committee

Again just two were required, and Gillian Bennett (69) an existing member of the committee who had stood for re-election was appointed, together with new member Carole Webb (43). Michele Codd, a longstanding member had not wished to continue this time. Esther Atkins becomes the reserve.

## The Company Accounts for 2017

These were introduced by Laura Green of Monahans, who had examined the accounts. Several questions were taken in advance of the presentation. Laura replied to all the queries raised by delegates, which seemed to be to the satisfaction of those concerned, but this particular format was difficult for others to follow at times.

Laura noted that corrections had been made, promised to remove any inconsistencies caused by the rounding up figures, and apologised for the rather clunky English in the general statement at the end, but it was the required wording. She explained that depreciation on property was standard, and it was unnecessary to have the building revalued. The complexity of the accounting convention that allowed some spending to be shown in the profit and loss account whilst other outlay became depreciation against tangible fixed assets was also tackled, with particular reference to some of the computing costs.

Possibly the most serious issues raised were later. There was the necessity to establish a client account for money from exhibitors coming in by card payment for STAR shows that would then be paid out to the clubs after a deduction for expenses. This did not mean a separate bank account, but the ring-fencing of money within the accounts. It was agreed this would be raised with the bookkeeper as it was important to incorporate as established procedure. Also, it had been identified that about £3,000 existed in credit vouchers within the system that were not identified on the accounts. There was the risk that there could be dual entry as income.

Laura's presentation gave assurance that the figures presented had been examined and checked together with the supporting documentation. It was not a full audit (more expensive) but gave a first level guarantee that nothing untoward had been found in the examination. With over £20,000 to be added to the reserves this had proved a good year for GCCF.

In response to queries about the reason for certain expenditure it was pointed out by an FC member that the spending was in line with the approved budget for the year. The accountant agreed that inclusion of the budget for that year would be worthwhile.

The conclusion to the discussion was **the 2017 accounts were approved**, (one against, one abstention), with the proviso that the credit vouchers were included within them.

### Breed, and Show news

#### Promotion, registration policy and SOP approvals



There is a new breed at Championship level, the **Suffolk**. Mrs Linda Spendlove (Club Secretary) gave thanks to Council delegates for their support, and to the Board members who had helped an inexperienced group find their way through the various stages of recognition. Breed classes can be included in shows not yet closed, and should be in all by mid-October, which will mean a breed class at the Supreme. Congratulations to all who have worked for this.

The **Korat & Thai BAC** and the **LaPerm BAC** had both incorporated the new GCCF rules (Section 1:12cii & 17a) into their registration policies which allowed for quicker progression to the supplementary register for foundation imports and outcrosses. There was also some relaxation for LaPerm breeders in the cats permitted in the pedigree background, as this would enable the registration of some imports that were currently excluded.

The **Exotic BAC** had made the two clarifications requested in February. It was now clear 'imports' referred to all cats brought onto the GCCF register from other organisations, not only those who came from overseas. Also, that DNA testing would be mandatory.

For the **Australian Mists** and **Chartreux** there were some comprehensive SOP changes. The **British Longhair** had introduced one extra word only.

All registration and SOP amendments were approved and it was confirmed that it was the BAC or Breeder Group responsible for the breed that was responsible for publicising the changes to breeders, exhibitors and judges. They were provided with appropriate email links in the confirmatory letter.

#### Judges

All judge appointments were confirmed. There was one brand new judge (**Margaret Lynch** on the Ragdoll list). Congratulations to her.

There was also an update on the purpose of the **Emeritus List** with a clarification that if judges had opted for this transfer they would not be entitled to do new certificate classes or go on new lists. However, they could return to full judging after a break if so wished.

### **BAC Review and Judge Training Groups**

There were very brief updates on these. The BACRG had met recently and reviewed the first proposals after receiving feedback. The proposals were now for a less complicated structure, avoiding extra tiers of administration. As soon as the minutes were ready they would be circulated so that further BAC response could follow.

The efforts of the Judge Training Review Group were currently going into the design of a new stewarding scheme. Confirmation of the BAC structure would assist with the shaping of the judge training procedure.

### **The 2018 Supreme Show**

The Chairman announced that the NEC had said that halls 17 & 18 were available again and the committee had accepted them as they were well liked by exhibitors. It was possible the inside car parking could be used again, but there was a stewarding cost for this. There would be no overhead rigging this year as it was expensive, but upright banners were to be purchased that would last for a few years.

There was some discussion on whether any show should not be allowed its regular date because of being within 13 days of the Supreme. It was noted that this came about because of movement of the Supreme rather than the shows. The names of the overseas judges expected were given.

### **Business matters**

#### **The Business Plan**

This had been completed by Steve Crow and Sally Rainbow-Ockwell based on the start made by the Vice-Chairman. It included the budget approved by the Board which could be used for comparison against the 2018 income and expenditure as shown in next year's accounts.

It was observed that several projects listed did not yet have leaders, and suggested that Board members not yet assigned to responsibilities should be asked to take these on at the July meeting. Names could then be listed on the website.

It was queried why the advertising budget had increased substantially. Steve Crow replied some additional promotion had been envisaged, but at this stage (six months into the year) it was most unlikely it would be needed. Advertising for the Supreme would be cut rather than enhanced as some undertaken in the previous year could not be confirmed as giving value for money.

## IT Report

Sally Rainbow-Ockwell reported that additions for breeders, clubs and judges were planned for release soon. Breeders would be able to make non-active to active status changes online. It was envisaged that most club returns would be able to be entered online in 2019 making it far easier for clubs to see what needed to be completed and paid for. Judges would be able to download exhibit details for their reports, saving a considerable amount of writing up time. This information would be available very quickly for STAR shows, and probably take about a week or so for others.

An update was given on STAR, including a report from a Show Manager, as the Merseyside had been the first club to use it from the beginning to the end of the process. Jen stated that 70% of entries had been made online. The show entry had been up on the previous year's, regardless of structure change and judge changes had been made particularly easy.

Future cost was queried and it was stressed that this would depend on the Board. The proposal would be for £50 set up fee and then a tiered levy per cat depending on the Office time involved in processing. These would be set at 40p (non STAR show) and 30p and 20p depending on the level of input completed by the club.

## Licensing & HMRC concerns

Steve Crow confirmed information given in his latest report on the website. The amendments to the Animal Welfare Act had been approved and licensing would come into effect in October once local council officers had been trained on implementation. There had been no written DEFRA definition of a commercial breeder. It would depend on the intention to make profit. Unfortunately, this was open to interpretation by both local councils and HMRC. The best advice he could give to all was to keep careful financial records.

He had attended a meeting at Westminster on the previous day. The good news was that in spite of some pressure from charities there were no plans to draft legislation concerning cat breeding, though action would be taken to raise the maximum term for animal cruelty from six months to five years.

He had been invited to sit on a new committee to advise DEFRA on cat welfare. The priorities identified so far were:

- 🚧 better regulation for advertising cats and kittens
- 🚧 microchipping
- 🚧 companionship for the elderly
- 🚧 the effects of electric constraint (fencing/boundary limitation)
- 🚧 conformation – breed extremes -the Scottish Fold, Persians and Sphynx mentioned.

## Partnerships

There was not a great deal reported. Merseyside had been successful in obtaining some Agria sponsorship. It was noted that Royal Canin were giving less, with more stringent terms and conditions concerning the presence of other food companies.

## IC/DC

Kym Jarvis had produced statistics showing the case load had increased this year, though was not so great as in earlier years (2011-13). The sale of sick kittens dominated as ever, with instances of FIP regularly mentioned. (The full details can be found the GCCF website [Investigation Report 2017](#)). Gillian Bennett reported on the retirement of Carole Butler who had been an extremely efficient secretary to all three committees for many years. GCCF owed Carole a debt of gratitude for the work she had done and now was a time to be patient with her successor who would be learning the procedures.

## Cat Welfare Trust

Rosemary Fisher had bad news and good. The current project remained stalled and Professor Tim Gruffydd-Jones had sent apologies for this. The researcher responsible had changed universities and the funding was in the process of transfer.

However, the CWT was supporting Dr David Connolly at the Royal Veterinary College. His project concerned hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, particularly in British Shorthairs. The aim was for a DNA test for HCM in British to be developed, and to enable therapy for all cats diagnosed with the disease. At present the symptoms could be alleviated, but there is no treatment for the condition so that would be a big step forward.

Rosemary reminded all that BACs could apply to the trust for funding for any breed study project. Also that all donations went to research, nothing was spent on administration. Therefore CWT was very worthwhile charity to support.

## WCC Conference and WCC 2021.

The Chairman reported he'd had an enjoyable trip to Italy (not at GCCF's expense) and the event had been extremely well organised, with excellent hospitality. Each year the bar was raised a little higher.

In planning for 2021 he had looked so far at Event City in Manchester and the Ricoh Arena on the edge of Coventry to compare them with the NEC. Manchester would reduce costs and probably provide a good gate. The Ricoh was smaller, but had plenty of facilities. Pricing had still to come in for the area required, and would probably be between the two. However, it had the benefit of being more central. Once the venue was decided then the date would have to be fixed. Delegates had various ideas on this, often determined by their own experience of their breed.

The time had ticked around to almost five o'clock. There was time for a general reminder to show organisers and reporters not to post pictures of children on their websites and social media. Only parents had that prerogative. Then Bruce Bennett gave a vote of thanks to the GCCF staff and delegates responded enthusiastically.

It was time to go home!

[Jen Lacey 21.6.2018](#)

