

## THE GENERAL MEETING OF GCCF COUNCIL, OCTOBER 2017

In June the Electoral meeting did not cover the business of the day and that was also the case for this meeting. An extra hour is always included for the Electoral Meeting to allow for the voting process, and this meeting opened just a little after 1pm and had to finish promptly at 5pm because the venue was required. So one hour shorter, but a lot less was covered as will be seen from the length of this report when compared with others.

The reason was the length of time given to discussing the minutes and whether they should be approved. One outcome of that was agreement that the meeting should be recorded with the purpose of confirming what was said. As the minute writer I've no objection to that, and it could be useful to play back to make a check when an amendment is requested and the actual words and their context would be useful.

However, that was not case yesterday. The minutes were on the website from the end of July and circulated to all delegates a month in advance. No corrections or amendments were received. Therefore, a lot of time was wasted that could have been better spent. It was perhaps a matter of style rather than substance, so if clubs are dissatisfied perhaps now is the time for it to be discussed and for suggestions to be submitted if something different is wanted. The legal requirement is that there should be only a record of the proposals and their resolution, and to stick just to that would discard some of the narrative context setting and debate summary. Reports presented would be retained in full as addenda, rather than give as a précis. If a sample of the different format required can be provided it would be useful for comparison.

Now for the more important information!

### Reports and Presentations

#### Licensing News

Steve Crow's report from the most recent meeting of the Canine & Feline Sector Group has to be the most important of the day. The Animal Welfare Act will be amended by statutory instrument (without parliamentary debate) next year. It could be as early as June, but is more likely to be in October. There will be five schedules, with cats and kittens referenced only in the general 'pet vending'. Cat shows will not be affected by new animal exhibition regulations, nor will there be any requirements specific to the breeding of cats as there are for dogs. That means no set number of litters in a year, nor any mention of how many breeding cats may be owned, (though of course the welfare sections of the AWA will apply).

The bottom line is a licence will be needed by those who sell kittens for profit. It will be essential for each hobby breeder to keep careful accounts, verifiable by receipts, to prove that there is no commercial gain. Steve gave a list of acceptable expenses which he had obtained from DEFRA, and these included show expenses. His report is on the GCCF website so should be read for the details.

NB It applied primarily to England, and, although it was expected that a very similar scheme would be introduced in Wales, this was not yet finalised by the Welsh Assembly. It was understood that the Scottish Parliament had no plans for change at present.

Those who use internet sites to advertise will be required to give a licence number if they have one. Those of us who remain unlicensed, probably the great majority of GCCF breeders, must be ready to demonstrate we are not making a profit. So there will be greater transparency, and we will have to be prepared to accept local authority or HMRC investigation, but the hobby of breeding and exhibiting cats is not going to be subject to licence control for all participants. Good news and somewhat of a relief for many, as applause from delegates demonstrated.

Steve was asked if there were any new controls about the age of kittens sold, and replied that this had not changed from the proposed 8 weeks. The cost of a licence was also queried, but he could only speculate as local authorities would be allowed to set individual rates based on their expenses. After the law was changed in 2018 there would be eighteen months or so allowed for implementation, so this would give those who needed it the opportunity to become familiar with the requirements and payment as specified by their own local environmental health departments.

Recalling Mr Wronksley's information on accreditation given at the June meeting a delegate asked if GCCF would still be considering this. Steve replied that it would be something for the Board to discuss, but he thought there was no longer the same need to pursue it.

### **Show Review and Judge training**

The other detailed reports given were a summary of the work of the Show Review Group from Kate Kaye, followed by an update from Peter Collin on the revision of judge training procedures.

Kate stated that it was her belief that the Show Review Group had largely fulfilled its purpose. It had begun in 2014 and following a rather slow start had consulted extensively. The many varied views given had been considered alongside the hard evidence of show data, as the intention was initially that the structural changes should provide balance in competition, particularly where some sections were growing ever larger while others declined. Then it had been concluded in Council that this also had an impact on judge training, and newly qualified judges being useful to show managers, and so this too became an important element.

She believed there could be further thought given to show management training and to consideration of the Household Pet Section, but otherwise the SRG had delivered on its remit. The work of BAC review and judge training revision could now really get going, but whereas the structural changes would take place next year these would take longer as there was much work to be done.

Peter stated that the aim of his group was to streamline training considerably so that it would be far more efficient. Its intention was to be educative rather than critique and personality based. There had already been consultation within the judging community, and it was proposed to engage as widely as possible. A meeting was planned for the following week and the first proposals would come to Council in February.

Comments followed from delegates representing breed clubs and BACs who were dissatisfied with the structural changes. It was made clear that Birman exhibitors did not want to lose their own grand class.

It was suggested that Siberians should be in a different Grand Group and a Suffolk representative asked for the breed to remain in the Foreign section rather than be moved into the Oriental, especially (as was stated) the Oriental exhibitors did not want them there. Kate and Peter both reiterated that nothing was set in stone, but the decisions had been based on number crunching to balance groups and sections far more than at present, and where possible to keep cats of similar body shape together.

Earlier in the meeting the point was raised by the Suffolk & Norfolk Cat club that ideas they wished to be discussed had not been. Extra certificates would be awarded without structural rebalance of the sections. The Chairman responded briefly that they were really out of time on this as the SRG had been given the responsibility of considering all such possibilities and tasked with recommending the options that covered the remit, and this was what had been done. It would have been impossible for all ideas to come to Council individually.

### **IT, the Business plan and Finance**

Sally Rainbow-Ockwell had been prepared to give a presentation of the IT developments planned. As there was no time she intended putting it onto the GCCF website and asked that delegates passed this on to their clubs as there would be important new information.

The Vice-Chairman could not present the Business Plan either, but it was already on the website and paper copies were circulated at the meeting. He asked that any queries should be sent in to the Office.

The operational accounts and volume figures are also published, and Mark Goadby would be happy to supply information on these. The accounts from the 2016 Supreme were discussed. The one query was on how much of the advertising finance allocated to promote GCCF had been spent in promoting the event. It was noted that the total amount spent on promotion had not exceeded what was planned in the budget, and approved in the 2016 Business Plan, and the previous Supreme Show Manager had not wanted the share for the event loaded onto the show itself. Money from this particular 'pot' also went to supporting the Pet Shows that showcased GCCF.

### **Breed, Club and Show news**

#### **New breeds, registration policy and SOP approvals**

There are two new breeds, and one new pattern now at preliminary level, and coincidentally all in the British section. The Chartreux and British Longhair will have new assessment classes, and it was agreed that BSH Harlequins would share an assessment class with BSH Van Patterned. Show Managers may offer the new classes at shows not yet closed, but must do so by 4th February 2018. The existing class is immediately available to exhibitors with cats registered as harlequins (BSH xx 02).

A new breed has joined the GCCF family, the Lykoi. Its registration was agreed by the Board at its meeting at the end of August enabling some to be present at the Supreme. Their name comes from the Greek for wolf and they have a unique type of coat dependent on a single gene, so are definitely unusual in appearance.

However, I think a Board decision that male torties should be registered and shown excited a greater amount of comment. The policy presented had suggested that where the breed class is specific for colours they should be shown with red males if a dominant colour and creams if dilute. From delegate comment on the day though, it became clear that showing them in the tortie class was the preferred option, and it was agreed that this could happen with immediate effect.

It was also agreed that the Board would consider again whether they should be allowed to be used for breeding. Many are sterile, a rare few are chimera which means that colour/pattern inheritance cannot be readily determined, and therefore not programmed onto the system, and, more importantly, that any DNA health screening cannot be carried by buccal swab with accuracy ensured.

All of the revisions to registration policies and SOPs were approved. The BSH registration was revised primarily to include the Harlequin, but with other adjustments. The Sphynx and Tonkinese BACs had more major revisions which included new DNA testing schedules, so breeders of these need will to check they are up to date. The policies can be accessed from the GCCF website, and more detail will probably be available from the BACs and breed clubs.

The Norwegian Forest Cat, Sphynx and Toyger all have revised SOPs. There were no major changes, but exhibitors and judges will need to become familiar with the adjustments. There were no queries on the day.

### Judges ....

All the judge appointments went through as proposed. Congratulations to all concerned, particularly to the two new pupil judges recently appointed, Bethan Hollandt in the British Section and Heather Roper in the Oriental.

### .... and show rules

A rule change was agreed that means that Full Judges working in the same section to which a new breed is added will become Full Judges for that breed. They will be informed and may withdraw if they wish, but an opt-out rather than opt-in change has been made. Pupil judges in the section will have the opportunity to become pupil judges for the new breed once there is a BAC for the breed to guide and monitor them according to the Judge Appointment Scheme.

Other show rule changes reminded judges to place cats in Olympian Classes to 5th, though only the certificate winner and reserve need to have published reports. Those who make a mistake and enter two shows within 13 days, but only go to one, will receive a warning rather than be disqualified and lose awards from the show they attended. Cats can now be entered in as many classes as an exhibitor wishes (and pays for) and BOB will not be counted as a class. A rule clarifying that titled household and pedigree pets may be on exhibition was withdrawn.

## **News of the 2017 Supreme**

There were 650 cats entered in competition with entries now closed. It needed to be more to secure income, but news on advance ticket sales was excellent. They were currently double the record level achieved the year before. Efforts had been made to be innovative and improve on the experience of the day, with additional catalogue features, new style certificates and a variety of displays and competitions.

There was a reminder given that upgrades could be made on Monday (there were several shows on Saturday where cats could achieve new titles), and counter signatures would no longer be required on certificates at the Supreme. Also, there was still the possibility of a room at the hotel where the Gala Dinner was to be held. Hotel and hall hire expenditure had been considerably reduced.

## **A News Miscellany**

### **Byelaw Change**

This was to bring the number of reserves for the Disciplinary Committee and Appeals Committee into line with the two required for the other elected committees. It had previously been four, but this was when DC and AC had nine and seven members respectively, with a greater number than the current three required for them to be quorate. After an amendment to note that in line with other Byelaw requirements for these committees they did not necessarily have to be Council members, it obtained the two thirds majority required for approval.

### **Appeals Committee Election**

Carol Pike and Cynthia Cullin had applied to continue on the committee and as there were no other applicants their appointment for a tenure of three years was confirmed. One vacancy for two years remained, as Betty Shingleton had retired when she became Vice-President. Two reserves were also required.

Three names were proposed from the floor. A paper vote was taken and Sarndra Devereux declared elected with Vanessa Marriott and Saffi Rabey to be the two reserves.

### **Disciplinary Committee Reserve**

There was a vacancy as Shirley Bullock had retired after many years as Chairman of DC following her election as GCCF's President. Therefore, the first reserve had taken the vacant place on the committee. Irene Roos had applied and as the only applicant her position was confirmed.

### **Other Business**

There was a slight tweak to the Judge Appointment Scheme that clarified that the BACs and clubs, rather than GCCF, paid for the circulation and postage of BAC paperwork.

A rule change went through that clarified that using titles as names or separate parts of names, even with punctuation, was not acceptable.

A discussion took place on club membership and eligibility for Council representation, but there was no definite indication that change was wanted. Some concern was expressed over viability for small breed clubs if membership capitation was increased. It was not the intention that this should be raised, but there would be a minimum membership fee of £20.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by reading out the winners of the 'Cat of the Year' Awards. Congratulations to all who achieved, and the complete list is available on the website.

That's the high note on which to conclude.

[Jen Lacey 6.10.2017](#)