

BAC Review Group Meeting
Somers Town Coffee House
Chalton Street, London



Minutes (inaugural meeting)

Present:

John Hansson (Chairman)	
Jules Candler	Hilary Dean
Kate Ekanger	Val Kilby
Jen Lacey	Sue Lorton Hobbs
Helen Marriott-Power	Steve Parkin
Sue Lorton-Hobbs	

Chairman's address

John opened the meeting at 1pm, thanked those present for attending and gave a reminder of the overall remit. The present method of training judges was not recruiting a sufficient number of new judges and the training procedure was slow with identified weaknesses. In particular, first time probationer judges were not sufficiently useful to show managers and so did not obtain the appointments to gain the required training and experience. The system favoured those who were well known.

He also commented on the fact that GCCF was the only organisation that trained on a breed basis rather than judges working across many in a division (CFA, TICA) or category (FIFe).

The aim was that the group should review current procedure to speed up the process and deliver effective, without any focus on whether a particular breed/ section was disadvantaged in the process.

Apologies for absence: Sally Rainbow-Ockwell, Peter Williams.

Introductions: Within the group were judges, show managers, BAC officers and members, breeders and exhibitors.

As Secretary of the Guild of Judges Hilary had taken opinion from members on problems that existed from the perspective of both Full Judges, Probationers and Stewards.

John was the liaison with the Show Structure Review Group and during discussion referred to the suggestions it had already put forward that were being debated.

Sue had collated points made via social media.

Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising from them None taken.

A previous BAC Review Group had existed, but it had not met for several years and the

membership was not the same. Therefore this was a fresh beginning.

What do we want to achieve? Aims agreed by all:

- Judges that were more useful to show managers more quickly
- A streamlined system that is user friendly and less bureaucratic
- Costs to be reduced where practical to both BACs and candidates
- Reduce the risk to exhibits from over handling for tutorial and assessment purposes (particular problem in minority breeds)

Blue sky thinking and initial ideas

Preliminary discussion focussed on the section revisions proposed by the Show Structure Review Group, with consideration that candidates should train either across the section, as with Persians, Orientals and British or around the 'Grand' groups in the multibreed sections (Semi-LH, Shorthair, and Foreign) and merged Siamese and Oriental Section. However, as it was believed this structure would not be approved by Council in its current form it was decided to take some ideas for immediate impact to improve procedure, or to try something new in a limited way.

- 1) To drop the term 'probationer' and describe candidates as 'pupil judges'.
- 2) Require BACs to give quarterly feed back to candidates, with the reminder that BAC discussion on progress can be electronic, only meetings where voting is taking place needing to be 'live'. **(wording required at 14a) JL to draft**
- 3) Addition to clause 24h) to allow greater flexibility for the provision of tutorials **(HD to draft the wording)**
- 4) Lists in multibreed sections remain separate, but a candidate to be able to apply to as many in the section as wished with a reduced fee of £10 if covering a group. **(HD to canvas opinion on 24h revision, list amalgamation and income reduction)**
- 5) Sample critiques (number ?) to be submitted with the application for promotion from the stewarding scheme to PJ, solely so that feedback on format and content can be given. **(addition to 20a JL)**
- 6) After promotion via the stewarding scheme pupil judges to attend three shows to judge miscellaneous classes, covering adult kitten and neuter, within the relevant section before progressing to judge kitten breed classes (reduced number?) (24d?)
- 7) First time PJs to be allowed to offer their services for free to any show manager while they are attending shows to gain experience judging miscellaneous classes. **(Code of conduct to be checked for rewording JL)**
- 8) Tutorials and assessment are not working in their current form, as they have become tick box exercises rather than demonstrating learning and a test. The tutorial forms need redesigning so that the pupil can describe what has been learned. Shadow judging could be done on a class and discussed. There needs to be an improved practical assessment.

Parallel judging was one suggestion.

- 9) The introduction of a written and/or verbal examination was considered a necessity. This is standard practice in other organisations.
- 10) It was agreed that there should be a proposal to the Board (and if agreed to Council) that the lists covered by the current Joint Rex BAC (Cornish & Devon Rex, LaPerm and Sphynx) would be amalgamated to form a single list that all new candidates would apply to. This would be a trial to see whether amalgamation of different breeds would prove acceptable and be functional. The registration policies and SOPs would have to remain the prerogatives of the individual breeds as operating within the JRBAC currently. Transitional arrangements for Full Judges and candidates on the schemes would have to be put into place following the models developed for the Persian and Oriental amalgamations. **(JL to take to the Board as a proposal). Note:** This item could be discussed at the next JRBAC after canvassing opinion to work out the process in more detail. It was appreciated that as these covered both different breed type & coat characteristics they would not follow exactly the same format as with previous list amalgamations. Any additional problems highlighted in the consultation process would have to be resolved. The JRBAC was considered the most logical choice based on that it already has its own Foreign Grand Class for Foreign Rex Breeds and Sphynx, and that the PJs on any of the individual lists work with all the breeds in miscellaneous classes, and would have to judge all of them in the future when qualified to judge higher certificates.
- 11) A rule change to be made to ensure that judges for new breeds are already qualified to work in the section applied for only. **(rule Section 1:43e JL)**
- 12) Also an addition to ensure that no Full Judge is disadvantaged (unable to judge Grands, Imperials and/or Olympian classes) by restructuring sections, breed groups and/or the addition of new breeds.
- 13) It was considered unnecessary to confirm appointments and promotions via the Council agenda. They could be published on the website on a weekly basis and remain for 28 days, and then be deemed to have Council's approval. Only if an objection was lodged with the Office in this period would the promotion of the person concerned need Council discussion. **(change required to Byelaw 7 JL)**
- 14) There was brief reference to the other functions of BACs in addition to judge training (responsibility for the SOPs, registration and breeding policies) and the quality of the representatives on them. It was considered a change was needed to ensure people with many years of experience were not excluded because they were no longer active, but also concern was also expressed at the suitability of some who attended as they both knowledge and experience.

This last point generated discussion on the suitability of BACs to make promotions. Some ignored the evidence of no major dissatisfaction throughout the period of training, and acceptable assessments in which promotion was recommended by a BAC appointed tutor judge, to vote against promotion with no rationale for this decision expressed to others at the meeting.

It was considered that the responsibility for promotion should be removed from BACs and passed to a Judge Appointment Panel (not consisting solely of judges) who would consider the factual evidence of the candidate's progress.

The logistics of this: how appointed and by whom, type of meetings and their frequency, whether cost would be involved were Not determined.

Also touched upon:

The licensing of judges; up to 10 tutors judges to be proposed by Full Judges of the breed list; and a need to restrict classes to 6 for any exhibit at back to back shows; also that the qualifications for neuter owners who exhibit to become a judges should be comparable with those of breeders as long as they have to go through the JAS in the same way.

Chair's comment:

Please be aware that the majority of these matters were merely discussion some, if agreed, would take longer to implement due to possible rule changes having to be approved.

Also BAC's would have to be consulted & discussions take place on how this could be practically implemented for the proposed groupings to work effectively.

This is very much a work in progress & these are initially only ideas, though there are some areas which could be implemented very quickly. E.g. 1.3. 5.6.7 8. 11.12 & 13, if the rules can be reworded to accommodate where necessary

Your comments are appreciated & will be taken on board, but please do not read into this that these are decisions which have been made & approved as that is emphatically not the case. This is merely a report on the first meeting of the group & we still have a long way to go to resolve all the issues.

The plan is that these will go first to the Board for consideration & if agreed by the board, those requiring rule changes will go to council for consideration to be voted upon in the normal way. All input along the way will be considered, though we are aware there will be conflicting reactions & ideas and we will never please all the people all the time.

Please feel free to re-post this if you wish.

John Hansson (Chairman of the Group)

(Report compiled by Jen Lacey.)