

Scottish Rat Club

Constitution and Rules

2011/2012

CONSTITUTION

The club shall be called the Scottish Rat Club

OBJECTIVES

The club exists to:

- represent rat owners, mainly in Scotland, but members from other areas are warmly welcomed.

- promote the Fancy Rat both as a show animal and a superb pet and to educate and encourage members to provide the highest level of rat care.

- promote the NFRS ‘standards of excellence’ against which Fancy Rats are judged.

- promote and encourage good breeding practices and to provide help and advice when requested.

- protect the interests and welfare of both Fancy Rats and the Rat Fancy in general.

Club Rules

1. Membership Rules

1.1 Membership of the Scottish Rat Club is open to all who are in agreement with the objectives and aims of the Club. Any members aged 16 or over can vote at an AGM and EGM and can stand for election to the Committee, having been proposed and seconded.

1.2 There shall be five grades of membership, namely: Life (awarded by an AGM), Adult, Family, Concessionary (Juniors, Students [Full time education], Over 60s), Overseas. Subscription rates will be reviewed by the Committee and submitted to the membership for ratification.

1.3 Payment of the subscription is deemed to constitute acceptance of the rules.

1.4 Membership runs for one year from the date that payment (in accordance with the current published membership rates) is received and is due for renewal annually on that date. A renewal letter will be sent out with the last *RatChat* [SRC Journal] of the current membership. A reminder letter will not normally be sent out.

NB: A lapsed member may not show their rats at SRC Shows until membership has been renewed and must immediately return any club property including cups and trophies.

1.5 Junior memberships are for those under 16 years of age. The date of birth of the member must be supplied to the Membership Secretary on joining. On reaching 16 years during a membership year the membership will be converted to Adult status and full voting rights will apply. The member must then renew at the full Adult rate at their renewal date.

1.6 A family membership covers all of those living at the same address. Only one copy of *RatChat* is included in this membership. All members aged 16 years or older within a Family Membership will have voting rights and must be named on the membership. The date of birth of any juniors within the membership must be supplied on joining.

1.7 Membership details are held by the Committee and will not be passed onto any third party or outside organisation without prior consent.

2. Committee Rules

2.1 Club business will be administered by a Committee.

The Committee will consist of the following elected officers;

- Chairman
- Administration & Communications Officer
- Treasurer
- Membership Co-ordinator
- General Show Secretary
- Shop Manager
- Publicity and PR Officer
- Committee Member
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Elections for these posts will take place at the AGM. All Adult Members are eligible to stand for election to the Committee posts, having been duly nominated and seconded by members. All Committee posts will be vote bearing.

The Committee may additionally appoint Club Workers including:

- Journal Editor
- Web Master
- Catering Manager
- Archivist
- Fundraising Officer
- Kids' and Fun Events Co-ordinator
- Agility Co-Ordinator
- Data Controller

These posts are not vote bearing

2.2 In the event of a post becoming vacant mid term the Committee may co-opt a member to fill the post until the next AGM.

2.3 The Committee will hold at least 2 face to face meeting each year, including the AGM and also meet online at least bi-monthly.

At least 5 members must be present for the meeting to be quorate. Minutes will be taken and all decisions recorded by the Admin and Communications Officer.

2.4 The Admin & Comms Officer or the minute taker in their absence, should submit a summary report of decisions taken for publication in *RatChat*.

2.5 The Treasurer will keep written accounts of all income and expenditure and inform the Committee of the financial position of the club. A report and copy of the audited accounts will be submitted to the AGM.

2.6 Any requests for reimbursement of expenditure must be accompanied by the appropriate receipt and claims made to the Finance Officer within 6 months. Any expenditure over £100 will be subject to full Committee approval prior to spending.

3. AGMs and EGMs

3.1 Proposals and amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the Club can be made at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).

3.2 An EGM may be called by at least 25% of the total Adult membership (or a majority of the Committee) who shall sign a petition stating their proposals and shall send this to the Chairman and Admin & Comms Officer.

An EGM may also be called by the Committee to seek the members' views and to deal with specific issues affecting the Club. The EGM must be held within 3 months—preferably at the next show.

3.3 The Admin & Comms Officer will circulate details of an EGM, and the proposals, to all members at least 14 days before its date.

3.4 Nominations for the Committee must be made in writing to the Admin & Comms Officer and/or Chairman and must be seconded. These may be e-mailed but will be subject to verification with the seconder by the Admin & Comms Officer and/or Chairman. Prospective candidates from the membership will be invited to apply for Committee posts by the closing date stated in the AGM notification letter (or in the Club journal, via the Club Forum etc). Voting for Committee posts will take place at the AGM. In the event of there being only one candidate the Committee shall declare the candidature unopposed and the position will be filled by that candidate. In the event of there being no applicants for a vacant post, the Committee will invite applications from the membership and/or shall co-opt a member to fill the vacancy as appropriate. There is no provision for postal or proxy votes at an AGM.

3.5 Proposals for an AGM must be made in writing to the Admin & Comms Officer and/or Chairman and must be seconded. These may be e-mailed but will be subject to verification with the seconder by the Admin & Comms Officer and/or Chairman. There is no provision for postal or proxy votes at an AGM or EGM.

3.6 For any proposal at an AGM or EGM to be carried, a majority of the votes cast must be in favour. Each proposal will be voted on separately. Only fully paid-up Adult members may vote at an AGM or EGM. There is no provision for postal or proxy votes at an AGM or EGM.

3.7 To achieve quorum at AGM or EGM a minimum of 8 paid up adult members must be in attendance.

4. Complaints and Grievances

4.1 Any grievance can be brought to the attention of the Committee at shows or otherwise in person/verbally for their attention and is in the strictest confidence.

4.2 Formal complaints must be made in writing to either the Chairman or Admin & Comms Officer.

4.3 All online discussions, communications and/or other documentation relating to complaints or grievances will be deleted 28 days after the resolution of the complaints process.

4.4 Any member showing blatant disregard for the rules or aims of the club, or bringing the club into disrepute by their actions will be asked to leave. Any future applications for membership will be referred to the full Committee for discussion and may result in specific terms and conditions being applied to the membership.

Show Rules

S1. Judging

S1.1 The Varieties classes will be judged according to the NFRS show schedule and using the NFRS standards of excellence.

S1.2 NFRS Judges will be used for all Varieties Shows. At Star Shows these must be Show or Championship status judges. At non-star shows the club will have the discretion to invite trainee judges to officiate at shows.

S1.3 Pet judges will be drawn from the general membership of the club.

S2. Exhibiting

S2.1 Non-members may show once only in Varieties/Pets and then must join the club.

S2.2 An entry fee will be charged for each exhibit in accordance with the current rates set by the Committee.

S2.3 No rat(s) owned by a exhibitor or living at the same address will be allowed to be exhibited or brought to the show as a Shoulder rat if any rats within the household have been exhibited or taken to another show or event within the 13 days preceding the Scottish Rat Club show.

S2.4 Varieties and Pets must be shown in approved show tanks. Tanks can be hired from the club at the rate set by the Committee (limit of 8 per membership – not per person).

S2.5 No distinguishing marks are allowed on or in the show tanks unless hidden from view e.g. on the underside. This includes toys, food bowls, bedding etc

S2.6 Wire sliding lids are preferred for Varieties classes. Plastic lids may be used in Pets.

S2.7 Adult rats must be shown singly (i.e. 1 per tank) Kittens may be shown in same sex pairs as long as they are easily distinguishable and in different classes.

S2.8 Exhibits must be owned and in possession of the named exhibitor at the time of entry.

S2.9 It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to ensure each rat is entered into the correct class and tank labels applied correctly. No movement of rats between classes will be allowed once judging has commenced.

S2.10 Kittens to be shown must be over 7 weeks and under 13 weeks. Adults must be over 13 weeks.

S2.11 All tanks must have appropriate substrate. This should be from the current approved list available from the Show Secretary and will include shavings, shredded card, hemp (aubiose), 'Easibed' and beech chippings. Hay, straw, teabag bedding, nesting materials may not be used.

S2.12 Rats must have a source of moisture in the tank (apple, carrot or cucumber). In cases of extreme heat or in tented shows a small water bottle may be attached to the tank.

S2.13 Rats can not be removed once they have been benched, except by the steward as instructed by the judge, unless permission is gained from the show secretary and judge.

S2.14 Entries must be made by the time stated in *RatChat* and on the club Website.

S2.15 All rats must be benched 15 minutes before the advertised judging start time. Exceptions may be made for exhibitors having been delayed for unavoidable reasons and having let the Show Secretary know of their approximate arrival time and circumstances.

S2.16 Cancelled entries will be refunded up until 8 pm on the night before the show – Hire tank bookings will be refunded up until the show itself.

S2.17 The club reserves the right to charge a surcharge for late entries (after the closing time) or alterations to entries on show day if the Show Secretary is willing to accept these.

S2.18 Awards may be withheld if, in the judge's opinion, a rat fails to meet the required standard.

S2.19 A written critique will be given for each exhibit on the day of the show. Rats disqualified for any reason will have this stated on the critique and the NFRS Standards Officer informed within 7 days.

S2.20 Trophies will not be awarded to non members.

S3. Breeder Details and Kitten Exchanges

S3.1 All exchanges of Rats at SRC shows must be pre booked.

S3.2 All rats changing hands (sold, exchanged or given away) at the show must be declared to the show secretary preferably before the close of entries and no later than 48 hours prior to the advertised show opening time.

S3.3 The seller must be a SRC member and must provide the buyer with a minimum of their name, address and phone number in case of problems. The seller should also provide details of the date of birth (or approximate in the case of rescues) and also any details of the family tree.

S3.4 All rats changing hands may be given a health check by a suitable person appointed by the Committee before sale.

S3.5 Kittens appearing to be under the minimum age of 6 weeks should not be at the show and will not be allowed to be exchanged.

S3.6 The club can accept no responsibility for any problems resulting from any sale/ exchange.

S3.7 The show organisers have the right to refuse permission for the sale of unsuitable animals.

S3.8 Pregnant rats should not be exchanged except by prior agreement between buyer, seller and Show Secretary.

S3.9 The club will maintain a Breeders List which members may choose to appear on. This list will be available on the Members' Forum and Club Web site and by application to members and non members via the Communications and Admin Officer.

S4. Exhibits Health

S 4.1 Each exhibitor/ attendee is asked to check their rats' health prior to the show.

S4.2 Health checks may be performed before judging commences to ensure no ill health was overlooked.

S4.3 Rats found to have active infestations or obvious signs of ill health will be disqualified and the NFRS Standards Officer informed within 7 days . If a rat dies or is discovered to have a potentially serious infectious disease at a show, then the owner is required to remove all their animals and take no further part in the show. The rats will not remain within the show hall but shall be removed to an area where other rats are not put at risk. If there is no suitable area, then the exhibitor can be asked to leave and the occurrence brought to the committee attention within 24 hours.

S4.4 If an exhibitor's rattery / stud has recently had an infectious disease/virus, such as SDAV, or unexplained deaths they may not exhibit at an SRC show until an appropriate period of quarantine has been completed. Advice should be sought from the Committee accordingly.

S5. General Show Rules

S5.1 Shoulder rats are welcome at shows unless otherwise specified by the venue (this will be published in the Show Advertisement).

All attendees are asked to follow the health rules for exhibits for shoulder rats also.

S5.2 Kittens under the age of 6 weeks and nursing does shall not be brought to shows.

S5.3 Any member that owns wild *Rattus Norvegicus* will be barred from showing or exchanging any rats at SRC shows until they have the wild rats tested for *Leptospira* antibodies. They will also not be allowed to advertise kittens via the club forum or be listed on the current Breeder List.