

NORTH OF ENGLAND RAT SOCIETY

Society Rules



2017-18

Constitution and rules of the North of England Rat Society

1. Title

- 1.1. The club shall be called the "North of England Rat Society".

2. Objectives

- 2.1. To uphold and encourage the fancy rat as an excellent pet and exhibition animal.
 - 2.1.1. To safeguard the interests of the fancy rat, and support the rat fancy in general.
 - 2.1.2. To advocate and champion the highest quality of rat care.
 - 2.1.3. To advance safe and reputable breeding practices.
 - 2.1.4. To adopt and promote the NFRS 'standards of excellence', by which fancy rats should be judged.
 - 2.1.5. To encourage and maintain optimum practice in judging and show management.
 - 2.1.6. To provide help and support for rat keepers throughout the North of England and surrounding areas.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Membership will be open to all who are in sympathy with the aims and objectives of the Society.
- 3.2. The subscription rates for membership renewal will be payable on the date one year after joining the Society.
 - 3.2.1. Any member failing to renew within one month of the renewal date will no longer receive the benefits of membership but shall be free to rejoin at any time upon payment of subscription fees.
 - 3.2.2. A member wishing to renew their lapsed membership within four calendar months of the renewal date will continue with their original membership, retaining any appropriate membership numbers.
 - 3.2.3. After four calendar months, a lapsed member must apply for a new membership of the society, with the price of membership including any appropriate joining fee.
- 3.3. Subscription prices will be set by the committee without requiring the prior approval of the members.
- 3.4. There shall be grades of membership as follows:
 - Individual
 - Family (any adult, their partner, and any children resident at the same address)
- 3.5. If a member's actions present a conflict with the rules, aims or objectives of the society, the committee may initiate the society's disciplinary procedures. The end result of this may be:
 - 3.5.1. A formal written warning

- 3.5.2. A suspension from the society for a specified length of time
 - 3.5.3. A lifelong exclusion from the Society
 - 3.5.4. Or a lesser action than 3.5.3.
 - 3.6. The Society's aim (and therefore the committee's) is always to educate rather than take punitive measures. A 2/3 majority of the committee is needed to agree on any course of disciplinary action.
 - 3.7. In the case of any member:
 - 3.7.1. Demonstrating a serious breach of Society rules
 - 3.7.2. Seen to be in direct conflict with the objectives of the society
 - 3.7.3. Having a grievance or complaint brought about them by another member of the Society
- The committee will meet to discuss the issue.
- 3.7.4. The member against whom the issue has been raised has the right to present their case to the committee, and have another member present for support.
 - 3.7.5. The member raising the complaint also has the right to present their case to the committee, and have another member present for support.

4. The Committee

- 4.1. The committee of the Society will be composed of at least seven persons who are members of the Society aged 18 or over. All members of the committee will be elected annually.
- 4.2. No person may hold more than one committee post concurrently. A person may hold one committee post and one or more committee support roles.
- 4.3. Committee support positions will be advertised to the membership via appropriate club media.
 - 4.3.1. Applications will be invited from any Society member aged 16 or over.
 - 4.3.2. Applicants will be voted on by the committee. A 2/3 majority of the committee must be in favour for any committee support position to be filled.
 - 4.3.3. Members chosen for these positions will not have a vote on the committee but will be invited to committee meetings and discussions.
- 4.4. A person holding the committee post of Chair may not hold a similar position (such as President, Chair, Chairman, Vice Chair, etc.) synchronously in another rat club. Any committee member holding another committee post at a different club shall disclose this to the membership.
- 4.5. Any situation not provided for in the rules that does arise may be dealt with as the committee see fit, providing this does not conflict with the objectives of the Society.
- 4.6. The committee will meet a minimum of four times a year, face to face or online (including the Annual General Meeting—AGM).
- 4.7. A committee meeting must have five voting members present to be quorate.
- 4.8. Votes at committee meetings will be calculated as a proportion of the entire committee, rather than of the members present on the day. Decisions must be made by a majority of the entire committee.

- 4.9. If a majority of the entire committee cannot be reached in a vote by the members present on the day, the decision must be passed back to the entire committee for voting at a later date.
- 4.10. All committee decisions other than those specifically referred to in the society rules, will be made by a majority vote.
- 4.11. Should a committee post become vacant mid-term, the committee may elect a member to fill that post until the next AGM or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
 - 4.11.1. Any elections in this manner must be announced to the membership via appropriate club media.
 - 4.11.2. Co-opted committee members must be elected by a 2/3 majority of the committee.
 - 4.11.3. Co-opted committee members will not have a committee vote.
 - 4.11.4. If the number of voting committee members falls below five, an EGM must be called unless an AGM is planned within two months.
- 4.12. Membership information is given to the Society on the understanding that it is used solely for the business of the club. This must be made explicit on any membership forms used.
- 4.13. Access to Society accounts and minutes from committee meetings will be provided to any member of the Society on request within a reasonable period of time.
- 4.14. The Hon Sec (or the person who took the minutes in their absence) shall be responsible for submitting a summary of each committee meeting to appropriate club media.
- 4.15. The Treasurer will be responsible for the Society's funds, and will keep records of income and expenditure.
 - 4.15.1. Invoices or receipts must be presented to the Society for reimbursement to be made.
 - 4.15.2. Expenses must be claimed within a period of three months and will not routinely be accepted outside this timeframe.
 - 4.15.3. No expenditure will be made on behalf of the society unless first agreed within the committee.

5. AGMs & EGMs

- 5.1. Votes at AGMs and EGMs will be allocated to members aged 16 and over according to their type of membership.
 - An individual membership will be entitled to one vote.
 - Family memberships will be entitled to a maximum of two votes. These votes will be allocated to up to two members of the family as listed on the membership form, aged 16 or over at the time of the AGM/EGM.
- 5.2. Every member who is eligible to vote will be given the opportunity to vote for the committee and for any proposals to be presented at the AGM.
- 5.3. Voting for committee and AGM proposals may be postal, or in person, or via email. Postal voting is not anonymous unless a committee post is contested. Other business (acceptance of previous AGM minutes and the accounts, plus any matters arising) will be decided by those present in person at the AGM. No statement made about,

or on behalf of, a person not present at the AGM or EGM should be recorded in the minutes unless and until confirmed by that person in writing.

- 5.4. Any committee position, whether vacant or filled, may be contested by any voting member aged 18 or over.
- 5.5. Fifteen votes must be cast in order for a decision made at an AGM or EGM to be quorate. This amount is to include postal and committee votes.
- 5.6. The Society's accounts will be audited by a person elected by a majority of the committee prior to each AGM. The Auditor must not be a member of the committee.
- 5.7. The constitution of the society can only be amended at an AGM or EGM.
- 5.8. At an AGM the following business will be undertaken:
 - 5.8.1. Each member of the committee and support team (or their representative) will present and answer questions on a report
 - 5.8.2. The audited accounts will be presented
 - 5.8.3. The committee will be elected
 - 5.8.4. Any proposals brought forward by a member or the committee will be voted upon. Proposals must pertain to changes in the Society rules, or the substantive administration of the Society.
- 5.9. The Hon Sec will circulate details of any AGM and invite proposals from all members.
 - 5.9.1. Only proposals received by the published deadline will be brought to the AGM.
 - 5.9.2. Postal voting forms will be distributed no less than 14 days before the AGM.
 - 5.9.3. Any motions will be carried by a simple majority of votes cast.
- 5.10. Amendments to the rules of the society (other than at the AGM) shall be at an EGM. An EGM shall be called by no less than 25% of the membership or a simple majority of the committee.
- 5.11. The EGM date and time will be decided by the committee and will generally follow the next planned show, with the location being one of the Society's venues.
 - 5.11.1. The Hon Sec will circulate details of any EGM and the proposal to be voted on.
 - 5.11.2. If the EGM concerns the appointing of committee members, a minimum of two weeks' notice of vacant posts must be given to the members prior to the deadline for submission of nominations.
 - 5.11.3. All members will then be given the chance to vote in person, or by post, or via email on the proposal, with postal voting forms being distributed no less than 14 days before the EGM.
 - 5.11.4. Any motions will be carried by a simple majority of votes cast.

6. Awards

- 6.1. Longevity awards
 - A NERS member owning a rat reaching the age of 28 months may apply for a Bronze Longevity Award for that rat.
 - A NERS member owning a rat reaching the age of 32 months may apply for a Silver Longevity Award for that rat.

- A NERS member owning a rat reaching the age of 36 months may apply for a Gold Longevity Award for that rat.
- A NERS member owning a rat reaching the age of 40 months may apply for a Platinum Longevity Award for that rat.

6.1.1. Rats awarded a NERS longevity award may have their names suffixed with NLA28, NLA32, NLA36, NLA40.

7. Championships

7.1. Rats awarded places in the Supreme Challenge at NERS shows will be awarded points as follows:

- 1st Supreme Challenge - 4 points
- 2nd Supreme Challenge - 3 points
- 3rd Supreme Challenge - 2 points
- 4th Supreme Challenge - 1 point

A rat gaining six Supreme Challenge points in total will be awarded the title "Varieties Champion" (VCh).

7.2. Rats awarded places in the Stud Buck class at NERS shows will be awarded points as follows:

- 1st Stud Buck - 4 points
- 2nd Stud Buck - 3 points
- 3rd Stud Buck - 2 points
- 4th Stud Buck - 1 point

A rat gaining six Stud Buck points in total will be awarded the title "Stud Champion" (SCh).

7.3. Rats awarded places in the Pet Challenge at NERS shows will be awarded points as follows:

- 1st Pet Challenge - 6 points
- 2nd Pet Challenge - 5 points
- 3rd Pet Challenge - 4 points
- 4th Pet Challenge - 3 point
- 5th Pet Challenge - 2 point
- 6th Pet Challenge - 1 point

A rat gaining twelve Pet Challenge points in total is entitled to apply for the title "Pet Champion" (PCh).

7.4. Rats gaining six Pet Challenge points and either four Stud Buck points or four Varieties Challenge points will be awarded the title "Grand Champion" (GCh).

7.5. Rats awarded places in the Agility challenge class at NERS shows will be awarded points as follows:

- 1st - 4 points
- 2nd - 3 points
- 3rd - 2 points
- 4th - 1 point

A rat gaining six Agility points in total will be awarded the title "Agility Champion" (ACh).

7.6. Points must be won under at least two different judges before a Championship (other than Grand and Agility Champion) can be claimed.

- 7.7. Rats awarded a NERS Championship may have their name prefixed with SCh, VCh, PCh, or GCh plus ACh as appropriate.

8. Rescue Fund

- 8.1. The Rescue Fund is administered through a set of rules covering who can apply for funding and what can be considered for funding.
- 8.2. For applications that meet all of the criteria for fast-tracking, payment can be authorised by three named committee roles.
- 8.3. Committee discussion and majority approval is required for all applications that do not meet the criteria for fast-tracking.

9. Show Regulations

- 9.1. All animals entering the show venue must be submitted for a health inspection prior to showing, on request.
- 9.1.1. The society will designate suitably knowledgeable persons to this duty.
- 9.1.2. Rats found to have active infestations or obvious signs of ill health will be disqualified from showing.
- 9.1.3. Rats failing the health inspection may either be refused entry to the venue by the Show Secretary, or kept in a designated safe area. Rats kept in the safe area remain the responsibility of their owners.
- 9.1.4. No rat under the age of six weeks will be accepted into the venue, unless in exceptional circumstances, where agreed by the committee prior to the show.
- 9.1.5. Animals of species other than rats may also be health checked, and refused entry under the same criteria. No animals of any species under "homing" age will be accepted into the venue.
- 9.1.6. The show secretary's decision on these matters is final.
- 9.2. Animals other than rats are permitted into the venue only where prior approval from the Show Secretary has been given.
- 9.2.1. Cats, ferrets, reptiles, and birds are to be specifically excluded.
- 9.2.2. Dogs are permitted into the venue only where prior approval from the Show Secretary has been given and where the venue in use allows it.
- Dogs must be kept leashed or crated in an area away from rats.
 - Leashed dogs must not be left unsupervised.
 - Dogs creating a disturbance or acting in a way that worries other animals present must be removed from the hall on request of the Show Secretary.
- 9.3. Hairless or any rats showing patches of significant hair loss shall not be allowed at any North of England Rat Society venue.
- 9.4. Rat exchanges are allowed within the show venue where the Show Secretary has been informed prior to the date of the show.
- 9.4.1. Rats to be exchanged must be submitted for routine health inspection to the Show Secretary or nominated health checker on entering the venue.
- 9.4.2. The person with whom the rat originates [breeder, rescue, owner – henceforth referred to as the seller] is responsible for informing the Show Secretary of the

exchange. Details of the person with whom the rat will leave the show must be given, and if this is a courier the name and details of the final destination [henceforth referred to as the buyer] must be provided.

- 9.4.3. The seller must provide the buyer and the Show Secretary with their name and telephone number as a point of contact, and a date of birth (where known) for the rat. Wherever possible details of a family tree should be given to the buyer, and for rescues a brief history if known. Any known health or temperament issues must also be disclosed to the buyer.
- 9.4.4. Exchanges of other species of animal will be allowed at the Show Secretary's discretion providing permission has been sought prior to the day of the show and points 9.4.1, 9.4.2 and 9.4.3 above will apply.
- 9.5. The committee has the right to refuse any animal entrance to the show hall.
- 9.6. All animals exhibited must be of the appropriate age:
 - 9.6.1. Variety section kitten classes are open to rats aged between eight weeks and thirteen weeks and six days old on the day of the show.
 - 9.6.2. Variety section adult classes are open to rats aged fourteen weeks and over on the day of the show.
 - 9.6.3. Pet section classes will be provided for all rats aged eight weeks and over on the day of the show. Pet rats must be entered in the most appropriate age limited class.
 - 9.6.4. Entries to the agility section and other extra classes outside of the standard variety or pet schedule will be open to all rats aged eight weeks and over on the day of the show.
 - 9.6.5. Rats of unknown or uncertain age should be entered into the most appropriate age-qualified class based on the owner's best estimate or knowledge of their age.
- 9.7. Show entries must reach the Show Secretary before the deadline as published to the membership via appropriate club media. Show entries received after the deadline can be accepted at the discretion of the Show Secretary, but will be subjected to higher entry fees.
- 9.8. All rats entering the show hall, whether entered for the show, pre-booked, or there for other reasons (e.g. shoulder rats) must be health checked.
- 9.9. Only one adult rat should be exhibited per show tank. Kittens (a rat over 8 weeks and under 14 weeks) of distinct varieties and of the same sex may share a tank.
- 9.10. All rats must be exhibited in tanks similar in size and shape to the Ferplast Geo XL. For a list of suitable tanks, or to clarify a tank's suitability please contact the Show Secretary.
- 9.11. Rats can be shown on any litter/bedding provided it is safe and clean. The society suggests such beddings as paper-based litter or shredded card, with additional shredded paper for kittens, but any other suitable bedding is acceptable.
- 9.12. All rats must have access to a small amount of moist food during the whole show. Cucumber, melon, or apple is suggested by the society, but any other moist fruit or vegetable suitable for rats is acceptable.

- 9.13. Any water bottles and food bowls must be removed from show tanks before the start of judging and not replaced until judging has been completed unless the Show Secretary announces otherwise.
- 9.14. The awarding of class placements is at the judge's discretion.
 - 9.14.1. First placings can be withheld if the rat is not to standard.
 - 9.14.2. Rosettes can be withheld if no first placing is awarded.
- 9.15. No smoking or consumption of alcohol will be allowed inside the venue.