

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Breed Watch, Bearded Collie

I have read the Kennel Club's letter on this issue with increasing incredulity and concern, and I am compelled to put in writing to you my deeply felt anxieties.

I have been involved in the breed for over 30 years, breeding, showing and judging; as far as judging is concerned this includes Crufts, all the regional Club Ch.shows except one, and appointments throughout Europe.

First of all, please tell me how either of these "concerns" can in any way impinge on health and wellbeing. These "concerns" seem to me to be a total non-starter from that point of view. I cannot imagine how they can have come from anyone who has studied our Breed Standard.

As far as coat length is concerned, if there were to be any alteration to the Standard as it currently stands I believe the trimming, scissoring and sculpting of the coat would become more prevalent. This sort of preparation for the showing is only too apparent in some exhibits overseas and is already not unknown here. Do we really want to promote the "hairdressers' model" Beardie in preference to our lovely, natural dog? A resounding "No" from me.

The second, additional "concern" relating to the proportions of the dog is more serious, and to my mind undermines the very essence of the Bearded Collie, which should most certainly be a long dog, with no trace of the cobbiness asked for in, for example, the PON. Our standard clearly stipulates a 5:4 ratio and it is this that gives our breed its distinctive outline and its flowing, ground covering gait, so unlike that of its cobbier cousins. Please do not tinker with this most important breed characteristic. To promote change in this respect would totally alter the breed, very much to its detriment.

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