



**Date:** 15th February 2026

## Statement from Current Officers

### Reflection on the Council's Current Position and Challenges

Mr Chairman, members,

The current officers wish to offer a brief and honest reflection on the position of the Gloster Fancy Canary Council and the challenges facing the fancy at this time.

It would be unrealistic to ignore the fact that, within the United Kingdom, the bird fancy as a whole is experiencing a period of decline. Membership numbers are under pressure, fewer new breeders are coming through, and the average age of participants continues to rise. These challenges are not unique to the Gloster Fancy, nor to this Council, but they do require careful consideration and responsible leadership.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that this is not a universal picture. In several European countries and beyond, the bird fancy is experiencing renewed growth and increasing interest, particularly among younger generations. This growth is being driven by modern communication, education, openness, and a willingness to engage with new audiences while respecting established standards.

For the UK, this contrast presents both a warning and an opportunity. The warning is that standing still—or looking inward—and criticising the council's achievements will not reverse decline. The opportunity lies in learning from successful models abroad, strengthening international cooperation, and ensuring that the Gloster Fancy remains relevant, accessible, and properly governed for the future.

The current officers firmly believe that the role of the Council is not merely to preserve tradition, but to guide the Gloster Fancy responsibly through changing times while safeguarding its standards, identity, and integrity. In pursuit of this responsibility, the Council has achieved a great deal:



- a. the worldwide distribution of educational material;
- b. the production of a documentary subtitled in eight different languages;
- c. support for countries establishing new Gloster specialist clubs;
- d. and most recently, the creation of the updated pictorial model of the Gloster.

This model has been welcomed internationally and printed in large-format displays beside judging tables as a clear and constant reference to the standard we are protecting.

It would be misleading to suggest that all of this progress has been universally welcomed. While the Council's work has been positively received and actively adopted in many countries, surprisingly we also had resistance, from the same United Kingdom. Another example is a recent correspondence that we received from a non-affiliated organisation. While differing opinions will always exist, the current officers do not believe that withdrawing from education, cooperation, or international engagement would serve the long-term interests of the Gloster Fancy or its future custodians.

Meanwhile, countries that are flourishing are asking questions—some seeking guidance, others, often with considerable experience, beginning to shape new rules and directions of their own. This is happening irrespective of ongoing debate within the United Kingdom. In contrast, many UK specialist clubs continue to struggle for survival. These realities underline the importance of unity, perspective, and constructive effort rather than division.

The challenges before us are real, but they are not insurmountable.

With clear direction, unity of purpose, and adherence to sound governance, the Gloster Fancy Canary Council can continue to serve the fancy effectively and responsibly in the years ahead.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mario Zahra