

## PRESS RELEASE

21 May 2003

### DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE SHOWS COMPASSION FOR TERMINALLY ILL VET

At a hearing before the Disciplinary Committee in June 2001, Dr Porter was found guilty, upon his own admission, on three charges of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. He was allowed to continue practising as a veterinary surgeon, subject to strict undertakings.

Last week the Disciplinary Committee resumed the Inquiry and heard how Dr Porter's life had changed immeasurably in the last two years.

The Committee heard that Dr Porter had now retired from practice and, according to his consultant neurologist, was suffering from the effects of a brain tumour and will not practise again. It is not inconceivable that the development of his brain tumour may have affected his ability to practise in the past few years.

With this in mind and recognising that Dr Porter posed no further risk to the public, Dr Judy MacArthur Clark, Chairman of the Committee, said:

*"Initially [Dr Porter] did comply with the Undertakings but latterly found some difficulties. It has now become apparent that this was largely, if not wholly, due to the development of a brain tumour. It is not clear for how long this tumour had been active but the full extent of this tragic situation is now quite apparent and the likelihood of the Respondent's ability to return to practice is negligible."*

*The Committee regards this as an exceptional case and feels the greatest sympathy for the Respondent in what has occurred ...*

*... In these wholly exceptional circumstances, the committee has decided that in compliance with its many obligations, it is able to make no further order in these proceedings which are therefore terminated."*

ENDS

---

For more information please contact the External Affairs Department at the RCVS:

Ian Holloway                      Direct Dial: 020 7202 0727  
Andrea Samuelson              Direct Dial: 020 7202 0725

[i.holloway@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:i.holloway@rcvs.org.uk)  
[a.samuelson@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:a.samuelson@rcvs.org.uk)

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The RCVS is the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons in the UK and deals with issues of professional misconduct, maintaining the register of veterinary surgeons eligible to practise in the UK and assuring standards of veterinary education.
2. RCVS disciplinary powers are exercised through the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committees, established in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (the 1966 Act). The RCVS has authority to deal with three types of case:
  - a) Fraudulent registration
  - b) Criminal convictions
  - c) Allegations of disgraceful professional conduct
3. The Disciplinary Committee is a constituted judicial tribunal under the 1966 Act and follows rules of evidence similar to those used in a court of law.
4. A direction to strike off a member from the RCVS Register of Members is subject to a 28-day appeal period.
5. Further information, including the charges against Dr Porter and the Disciplinary Committee's findings and judgment can be found at:  
[www.rcvs.org.uk/vet\\_surgeons/complaints/dis\\_hearings.html](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vet_surgeons/complaints/dis_hearings.html)