

The 181st Annual General Meeting of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons was held at the Royal Institute of British Architects as part of Royal College Day 2024, on Friday 5 July 2024, with Council and VN Council members, members of the RCVS and senior RCVS staff present.

The President, Dr Sue Paterson, opened the Annual General Meeting and welcomed Council and VN Council members, RCVS Award winners, their guests and everyone present. In her introduction she outlined that this was her last RCVS meeting in her current role and that she would be handing over the chain of office to Linda Belton.

She also used the opportunity to say farewell to RCVS Registrar and Director of Legal Services Eleanor Ferguson who was retiring from the role after working at the College for 20 years.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on Friday 7 July 2023, which had also been made available online, were confirmed and approved as a correct record.

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023

The President formally presented the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023.

Questions about the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

The President said that two questions had been received prior to the AGM, both from the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

The first question was:

The annual report indicates that the College holds reserves of £15.3 million, exceeding the target level by £4.3 million. What are the specific long-term projects or initiatives, aside from the Hardwick Street refurbishment, that these excess reserves are intended to fund, and how does the RCVS plan to manage these funds to ensure they continue to support the College's strategic objectives?

To which Dr Paterson gave the following answer:

As stated in the annual report, the excess reserves are being retained to provide funds for the building works and major refurbishment of our new offices in Hardwick Street, in addition to other large-scale projects, such as a new customer relationship management system and a new website.

In addition, the reserves will provide contingencies not only for these large-scale projects, but also for unforeseen projects where significant additional resource maybe required at relatively short notice, such as for any changes in legislation, or the findings and requirements of the CMA investigation.

Ultimately, RCVS Council is responsible for managing funds, although it is delegated to the Finance and Resources Committee. All expenditure has to be managed in accordance with our established financial policies, procedures, and protocols for major projects.

The second question from the BVA was:

The income from veterinary surgeons has increased from £11.3 million to £12.2 million. Please could you provide a detailed breakdown of how this additional income has been used, particularly in areas that directly benefit the veterinary professions, such as professional development, support services, or new initiatives?

To which Dr Paterson gave the following answer:

The total income from veterinary surgeons increased by £0.9m, as a result of an increase in fees, plus an increase in the number of registered veterinary surgeons. The fees for veterinary surgeons were increased by 4% from 1 April 2023, which was a below-inflation increase and the first increase since 2020.

Fees from veterinary surgeons can be used for activities under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and the Royal Charters. There is some further detail about expenditure in note 6 to the accounts.

As stated, the total income from veterinary surgeons has increased by £0.9m, with expenditure for regulatory activities increasing by £0.6m. This covers costs associated with concerns investigation, the Veterinary Client Mediation Service, registration, advancement of the professions, VetGDP, and university visitations. The balance will be used for other initiatives going forwards including the new Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways project.

All costs increased by inflation and the additional income helped to support the continued delivery of those activities in the face of inflationary pressure.

Council and VN elections

The Registrar then turned to the results of the 2024 RCVS Council election.

The Registrar read out the report of Civica Election Services relating to the election of RCVS Council.

The newly-elected Council members were as follows:

	Nominee	Votes
1	Dr Zara Kennedy	2,264
2	Dr Sinéad Bennett	1,796
3	Professor David Barrett	1,747

The President also welcomed Professor Christopher Loughrey as a Veterinary Schools Council-appointed member of Council.

Council retirements

The President paid tribute to the following outgoing Council members.

First was Dr Melissa Donald who had served for a total of eight years on Council and was RCVS President in 2022 to 2023. The President praised her for work in guiding the complicated and multi-faceted 'under care' consultation, proposals and changes during both her time as Chair of the Standards Committee and her presidential year.

Next was Dr Kate Richards who had been a member of RCVS Council for a total of eight years, serving as President for 2021 to 2022. The President highlighted that, during Kate's presidential year, she had helped ensure that the RCVS was leading and coordinating conversations around the workforce crisis and the efforts to find workable solutions to it.

Next the President said farewell to Professor James Wood who had served on Council for a total of 11 years, both as an appointee of the University of Cambridge and, latterly, of the Veterinary Schools Council. The President praised his insight and input as a member of the RCVS Education Committee and his involvement in the Veterinary Clinical Careers Pathways project.

The last farewell was to Professor Stephen May who had served on RCVS Council for 19 years in total, including as RCVS President in 2017 to 2018. The President praised Stephen's passion for veterinary education and ensuring that new veterinary graduates had the requisite technical and non-technical skills to be able to thrive in the profession. She highlighted how he had spearheaded the 'Graduate Outcomes' project during his presidential year – which eventually led to the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP).

Veterinary Nurses Council

The results of the 2024 VN Council election was read out by Belinda Andrews-Jones, Chair of VN Council.

The newly-elected Council members were as follows:

	Nominee	Votes
1	Kirsty Young	995
2	Susan Howarth	923

The Chair of VN Council also welcomed two new appointed lay members to VN Council, Lisa Grainger and Jessica Franklin. Lisa replaced Sarah Fox, who stood down earlier in 2024, while Jessica replaced Alison Carr, who retired from VN Council at the AGM.

Belinda praised Alison for bringing to VN Council her vast experience of working for a wide variety of professional bodies and regulators, including as former Chief Executive of the Architects Registration Board.

She also said farewell to retiring elected member of VN Council Donna Lewis who had served on the CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee where her experience as an assessor and clinical coach had been invaluable.

Date of next AGM

It was confirmed that the next Annual General Meeting would be held on Friday 4 July 2025 at One Great George Street, Westminster.

Meeting of the RCVS Council to elect President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Dr Danny Chambers
- Professor Christopher Loughrey
- Professor Timothy Parkin

Approval of the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2024-25

Council approved the appointment of the new Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2024-2025, as follows:

President: Linda Belton MRCVS

Senior Vice-President: Dr Susan Paterson FRCVS

Junior Vice-President: Professor Timothy Parkin FRCVS

Treasurer: Dr Matshidiso (Tshidi) Gardiner MRCVS

Date of next meeting

The next public meeting of Council would take place on Thursday 11 September 2024 at 10am.