Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 June 2014 at 10:00 am at Belgravia House, 62/64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF

Members:
Col N C Smith (President in the Chair)
Professor D J Argyle* Mrs R J Jennings*
Mr C T Barker Mr P C Jinman
Professor M Bennett Dr J B Johnson*
Ms A K Boag Professor P Lees*
Dr K Braithwaite Professor S A May
Professor N Burrows* Ms J R Molyneux
Professor E Cameron Dr R P Moore
Mr D F Catlow Professor J S Price
Mr N T Connell Professor S W J Reid
Professor S M Crispin Mr P B Robinson
Dr J V Davies Miss C F Shield
Mr R Davis Mr R S Stephenson
Professor S Dawson Dr C P Sturgess
Mr M F Elliott Mrs C J Tapsfield-Wright
Professor G C W England Lord Trees
Mrs C N Freedman Mr C W Tufnell
Mr N P Gibbens Dr B P Viner
Mr C J Gray Ms J Webb
Professor M E Herrtage Dr T H Witte
Mrs L V Hill Professor J L N Wood
Mrs A K Jeffery

*Absent

In attendance:
Mr G A Hockey Director of Legal Services & Registrar
Mrs K E Kissick Chairman, Veterinary Nurses Council
Mr N C Stace Chief Executive & Secretary

President’s introduction

1. The President opened the meeting and outlined the day. He extended a warm welcome to:
• Mrs K E Kissick Chairman, Veterinary Nurses Council
• Mr R Hargreaves President, British Veterinary Association
• Mrs S Paterson incoming RCVS Council member from July 2014

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from:

• Professor D J Argyle
• Professor N Burrows
• Mrs R J Jennings
• Dr J B Johnson
• Professor P Lees

• Ms E Butler – Chairman of Audit and Risk Committee, an invited guest to Council.

Declarations of interest

3. The President reminded Council to check their website entries and to forward any amendments to their declarations of interest to Mrs P Dean in the Executive Department (p.dean@rcvs.org.uk).

4. There were declarations in the meeting from:

• Professor S Dawson – Junior Vice President of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association;
• Mr P C Jinman – Lay member, Standards Committee of the House of Commons; consultant at Royal & Sun Alliance;
• Professor J S Price – Member of the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group (established by the Welsh Government);
• Col N C Smith – RCVS Appointed member of the Farriers Registration Council;
• Professor J L N Wood – production of statement(s) as Honorary Publications Officer for BEVA

Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 March 2014

5. Council accepted these minutes as a true record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Obituaries

6. A written obituary for Lord Ballyedmond, founder of Norbrook Laboratories, had been circulated to Council. (Extract from the Veterinary Record dated 29 March 2014).
7. Council stood and observed a minute’s silence for all members who had passed away since the last Council meeting.

Council correspondence and matters for report

RCVS Day 2014
8. The President reminded Council of arrangements:

Date: Confirmed as Friday, 11 July 2014 @ 10:00 am
Venue: One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA
Guest speaker: Professor Sarah Cleaveland BSc BA VetMB PhD MRCVS FRSE, University of Glasgow on: ‘International perspectives on zoonotic diseases: tackling complexity through collaboration’

Congratulations and thanks
9. The President invited Council to join him in offering congratulations to two members:

• Professor S M Crispin who had been made a life member of the BSAVA; and
• Miss C F Shield on her recent marriage (Miss Shield will be maintaining her maiden name for professional purposes).

CEO Update
10. The CEO outlined his report to Council, and noted that the Practice Standards Scheme, Charter and Alternative Disputes Resolution would be before Council during the meeting. He highlighted the new complaints process; which would speed up the process for both the public and the profession.

11. He also highlighted the following: the College was ‘listening’ and the first rate regulator benchmarking exercise had fed into the RCVS Strategic Plan; there had been many months of work on the 24/7 debate to be further discussed in the afternoon session; as regards the consultation ‘Fellowships; a Survey of the Profession’ – results are due in at the start of July; and there was to be discussion on post-nominals later in the meeting.

Matters for Decision by Council

Annual accounts
12. The Treasurer presented the accounts to Council highlighting that there had been a significant change inasmuch as they were now in the charity SORP format to improve comparability and transparency as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).

13. The Treasurer stated that the process of separating the income and expenditure for Charter and statutory functions was unhelpful because the two functions are so closely interlinked that the figures could only be approximate. On this basis, and having received legal advice from Field Fisher Waterhouse that a holistic approach was appropriate, it was decided that the figures
should be combined. The ARC endorsed this approach. It was agreed that this approach be communicated to the profession.

14. It was noted that registration fees were frozen for a 5th consecutive year, meaning the RCVS continued to compare very favourably with other professions with much larger memberships and, in real terms, this meant that the retention fee paid by members had fallen by about 12% over that time.

15. The accounts were approved.

**New RCVS Charter**

16. The President, introducing the paper, noted that the BVA had raised certain concerns over the draft new Charter which was the subject of consultation in December 2013, but that the Association had indicated that it was content with the amended version which Council was now invited to approve. Professor May, as Chairman of the Legislation Working Party, acknowledged the helpful contribution made by the BVA’s representative on the Working Party.

17. On a vote, Council agreed unanimously to approve the draft new Charter and bye-laws for submission to the Privy Council Office, subject to the approval of the members at the annual general meeting in July.

**Governance review 1 year (delegations)**

18. Introducing the paper, the Registrar indicated that Council elects the chairmen of the Education and Standards Committees and, that it was proposed that committee minutes should cease to be part of the Council bundle when a new system for making them available to Council members was available.

19. In discussion the following points were made:

- there was logic in the proposal in paragraph 17 of the paper that the Education Committee should make all decisions on the recognition of veterinary degrees, but such decisions ought to be reported to Council;

- there was concern that the arrangements for appointing committee members should be more transparent;

- it was not clear how Council could debate issues arising from decisions by the statutory committees;

- Council members should be able to challenge decisions by the non-statutory committees, not just note them, and there was concern about committee decisions being implemented before Council members had had the opportunity to review them;
- against this it was argued that a governing body which, because of its size, only met three times a year needed to delegate so that decisions could be made between meetings;

- if decisions were to be wholly devolved to committees, they ought to include appropriate lay membership.

20. It was noted also that the Audit and Risk Committee had raised a concern over the circulation of all its agenda and papers to all Council members. It was accepted that these papers could include sensitive material and were not suitable for circulation outside the committee. [Other committee agendas and papers will continue to be circulated to Council by e-mail.]

21. There was discussion about the circulation of committee minutes with the Council papers. On a vote it was agreed that all committee minutes should continue to be circulated as part of the papers for Council meetings, as is the current practice.

22. Council also voted on the proposal that the Education Committee should be responsible for all decisions on the recognition of registrable degrees (it was confirmed that Counsel's Opinion had been obtained that there was clear power for Council to delegate this statutory function). 17 votes were cast for the motion and 11 against, with seven abstentions. There followed confusion about the protocol for voting. The Registrar stated that by convention RCVS Council accepts abstentions and a majority vote (by which the vote would be carried), but that article 6 of the Charter provides for questions before Council to be decided by a majority of the members present and entitled to vote (by which the vote would not be carried). After this was stated, a number of members indicated they were unwilling to follow the convention and the motion was declared not carried. Council agreed that it would reconsider the issue at the November Council meeting. It was suggested that if the voting rules had been clear in advance Council would have known which abstentions were by choice and which were because a member was not entitled to vote.

23. It was noted in further discussion that the proposed new terms of reference of the PIC/DC Liaison Committee would be less prescriptive over its composition. The committee would be required to include the chairmen of PIC and DC and a Council member who served on the Operational Board, but that left open the question of who else might be a member of the Liaison Committee. It was suggested that it might be helpful to have a second DC representative, since DC did not often meet as a full committee, and that there should be a lay member to represent the public interest. It was also observed that, as PIC and DC moved toward full independence from Council, the Liaison Committee would have an important part to play in ensuring that the statutory committees understood the standards set by Council.

24. It was agreed that the issue of lay representation on all Council committees should be considered as well as the threats and opportunities of the increasing separation of Council and the Disciplinary and Preliminary Investigation, Committees

25. Council approved the majority of the recommendations in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the paper as follows:
- the delegation scheme should be amended so as to delegate to the Operational Board the appointment of members of all committees (not the Chairman of the Standards and Education Committees and VN Council);

- papers for Council meetings should (continue to) include minutes of committee meetings;

- the remit of the Treasurer should be removed from the delegation scheme;

- the Operational Board should take on responsibility for the registration matters which are currently within the remit of the Standards Committee.

- the terms of reference of the Audit and Risk, Liaison, Specialist Recognition Appeals and Standards Committees should be revised (as set out in the annex to the paper).

- the statement of financial controls at Annex A and the amended delegation scheme at Annex B.

**Registration Regulations**

26. The Registrar, introducing the paper, reported that it had not proved possible to agree with DEFRA a final draft of the new regulations for Council to approve, so this would now be for the November meeting.

27. It was noted that the new Directive on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications gave scope for language testing in certain circumstances. The possibility of amending the Veterinary Surgeons Act for this purpose was being discussed with DEFRA.

28. The question was raised whether registration could be separated from licensure for practice, as happened in some countries. Possession of recognised qualifications conferred entitlement to registration, but further conditions – which might include language competence – had to be met in order to practise. It was agreed that the separation of registration and licence to practise would be re-considered, although the Registrar indicated that his understanding was that this was not possible under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

29. It was observed that significant numbers of people of UK origin were enrolled on undergraduate veterinary courses in other member states and would in due course be entitled to practise in the UK on the strength of their recognised degrees. Their choice of studying overseas probably reflected the surplus of well-qualified candidates seeking admission to the UK veterinary schools.

**Alternative dispute resolution (Redress)**

30. Dr Davies, introducing the paper as chairman of the Preliminary Investigation Committee, observed that a relatively small number of complaints from users of veterinary services came to the College, but that a high proportion of them fell outside the statutory jurisdiction. The proposed trial would be designed to test one possible approach to dealing with those complaints. The
Veterinary Defence Society had indicated a willingness to support a trial mounted by the College, on the basis that other options would then be fully considered in the light of the results.

31. It was noted that the College could not require any veterinary surgeon to accept the recommendations of any consumer service, but it was hoped veterinary surgeons would cooperate with the trial. The level of compliance on the part of practices was one of the matters to be tested by the trial.

32. In discussion it was observed that the EU directive only applied to disputes between traders and consumers who were natural persons acting for purposes outside their trade, business, craft or profession. That would exclude many disputes relating to businesses.

33. Concern was expressed over the possibility of dispute resolution arrangements having significant financial consequences for veterinary surgeons, because many complaints seemed to be partly about money. It was also noted that it would be difficult to assess the likely costs of a full scheme which was not subject to the same limitations as the proposed trial, in view of the difficulty of forecasting the number of complaints that might come forward.

34. Council agreed to a trial on the lines set out in the paper, subject to the Operational Board deciding the details.

Risk register

35. The President, introducing the paper, stated that the risk register before Council had been revised as requested at the November 2013 meeting and, that the ARC advised that the document should be accepted as a ‘living’ document, to be reviewed again in 12 months time.

36. Mrs Hill, on behalf of the Chairman of ARC, commended the work undertaken to produce the register before Council, and stated that the committee was also interested in all the risks to the College, not just the financial risks, and would be looking at specific areas of College activities over the next year.

37. A vote was taken to accept the register as detailed in the paper – this was carried.

Practice Standards Scheme – update

38. The Vice President, Ms Molyneux, introduced the paper, stating that the principles of the Scheme had been passed by Council a year ago, but following various consultations, meetings and discussions on the direction of the Scheme, this update was before Council to ensure the approach was agreed.

39. Proposals included keeping the main 3 groups the same: core / GP / Veterinary Hospital, a modular ‘clusters’ concept which would each be graded satisfactory, good, or outstanding that would further differentiate between practices.
40. It was further noted that fees would need to increase to cover the costs for the revised Scheme to ensure it remained self-funding, and to repay part of the set up costs provided by the College.

41. Ms Molyneux sought Council’s approval to continue with re-developing the Scheme with the view to bringing a subsequent paper to Council with full details, in order to launch the Scheme at the London Vet Show in November 2015. Approval was granted by Council.

**Postnominal qualifications**

42. The President introduced the paper, noting that a hard copy of the online petition started by Victoria Lilley with over 1600 signatures had just been delivered to the College. The decision in 2012 to limit postnominals on the register (which had not yet been implemented) was one of a series of measures relating to the introduction of Advanced Practitioners and clarity of the register and was due to be introduced in 2014. Due to the strength of feeling against the proposal the Operational Board had invited Council re-consider its decision.

43. Mr Tufnell, as Chairman of Education Committee, provided background to the original decision, noting that the then Registration Sub-Committee had raised concerns at the proliferation of postnominals on the Register as far back as 2009. The confusion about who was a specialist or not had been echoed by Professor Lowe in his report to DEFRA on veterinary services, as well as by Professor Calman, who had chaired the College’s specialisation working party tasked with reviewing the specialisation framework. It was important for Council to note that the present debate was not about the introduction of Advanced Practitioner status, nor about removing or devaluing qualifications, or preventing Members from using their qualifications, but about whether or not additional postnominals should continue to be displayed on the Register.

44. The working party’s recommendations had been carefully thought through and made in the context of animal welfare with the need to improve public understanding of the different levels of expertise available within the profession. Whether or not postnominals continued to be displayed on the Register, the emphasis should be on the accredited status of Specialists and Advanced Practitioners. It was this status, subject to periodic revalidation, which would provide independent assurance to the public on the current competence of the veterinary surgeon. Arguably, it was perhaps of lesser importance whether additional postnominals were also shown on the Register, provided that a Member’s accredited status was clear on Find a Vet and Register searches.

45. Valid arguments had been raised about the need for the College to continue to acknowledge the significant commitment of those who had achieved additional qualifications. It was also helpful for the College to retain a list of Members’ qualifications if it could serve as an independently verified source of information for the public and professions. Whilst Members were free to list any of their qualifications on their own stationery and practice websites, the RCVS Register provided a valuable check. If RCVS continued to display postnominals, it would be important that they were also explained for the benefit of the public and referring veterinary surgeons. Concern was raised that both vets and the public would be disadvantaged without listing of postnominals when seeking services of members holding those qualifications.
46. One suggestion was that the Register should be re-ordered, to present Members as licensed to
practise on one of three lists: Registered Member, Advanced Practitioner, or Specialist. This also
linked to the point made by Mrs Hill earlier in the meeting about the value of separating the
licence to practise from recognition of qualifications for registration.

47. The paper invited Council to consider three options:

- to uphold its 2012 decision to remove additional postnominals once the new Advanced
  Practitioner list was populated in 2015;
- to main the status quo, continuing to list a wide range of postnominals;
- to consider a compromise position, whereby a rationalised list of allowable postnominals
  would be shown on the Register.

48. Council unanimously rejected both the first and second options. It was AGREED that a paper
should be brought back to Council with proposals for a compromise position, such that some
additional postnominals should continue to be displayed on the Register.

49. Mrs Jeffrey also invited Council to take veterinary nurses’ qualifications into account in their
considerations.

Reports of Committees – to note

Audit and Risk Committee

50. In the absence of the Chairman, Mrs Hill introduced the ARC papers. Council noted the January
2014 and April 2014 minutes.

51. Outlining the annual report of the committee, Mrs Hill emphasised that the committee had
completed all issues relating to the McKelvey Report and would not be revisiting them. It was
noted that the committee were pleased with the new format of the annual accounts and, in
relation to internal audit, it was agreed that it must be proportionate and value for money.

52. Finally, it was asked that ARC papers were not circulated to Council before the meeting, as there
could be some private and confidential matters not for general circulation contained within them,
but that minutes would still be freely available. This was agreed.

53. The report was noted.

Education Committee

54. The report of the meeting held on 7 May 2014 was presented by the Chairman, Mr Tufnell. He
thanked the Education department staff for their work on the Fellowship consultation and
implementation of Advanced Practitioner status. Dr Sturgess was Chairman of the Panel of
Assessors. Members of Council were encouraged to look at the information about Advanced
Practitioner status on the website but to note that it was still subject to further development as
implementation progressed. A proactive approach to disseminating information about Advanced
Practitioner status was called for, and further work would be undertaken to promote the new status to the profession and the public over the coming year.

55. Mr Tufnell reported that RCVS was reviewing its degree accreditation criteria in line with AVMA and AVBC criteria. Following a follow-up visit undertaken in March, the Committee had agreed that recognition of the University of Nottingham’s veterinary degree should continue until 2018. Accreditation of the veterinary degree from the University of Pretoria had also been confirmed for a further period, following RCVS participation in the SAVC’s visitation last year.

56. In response to a query, the Chairman confirmed that the Share Jones lecture would be retained. However, as there was no funding for it, no appointment would be made in 2014 to allow time to consider how to take this forward in the future. The Committee’s view was that the lecture should not be restricted to anatomy.

57. The report was noted.

Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee

58. The President introduced the minutes of the Liaison Committee meeting held in April. It was noted that there had been discussion on the terms of reference and membership of the committee under the Council delegation scheme.

59. There were no questions and Council noted the minutes.

Standards Committee

60. Mrs Tapsfield-Wright, the retiring Chairman thanked Standards committee members and RCVS staff for all their help and kindness during her time on Council and as Chairman of the committee. She particularly thanked Professor Herrtage for his work on the Recognised Veterinary Practice Sub-Committee.

61. With regard to the proposed amendments to Schedule 3 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, it was suggested that there could be more clarity on the meaning of medical treatment.

62. The minutes were noted.

Veterinary Nurses Council

63. The Chairman of Veterinary Nurses Council, Mrs Kissick, presented the report from the meeting held on 6 May 2014 and highlighted the following points:

64. A very constructive meeting had been held in April with the President and Vice-President of the BVNA, at which BVNA had expressed full support for the new Charter proposals. VN Council was also grateful for the support of BVNA in other areas, including the opportunity for existing RVNs to make their professional declaration.
65. The Chairman highlighted that Mrs Elizabeth Cox had been appointed as Vice-Chairman of VN Council for the year 2014/2015; and that the Golden Jubilee award winner for 2014 was Hayley Walters, RVN and the award would be presented at the AGM in July.

66. The report was noted.

Reports of Statutory Committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee

67. Dr Davies, Chairman of the committee introduced the report, stating that work undertaken with other agencies was contained within the paper and that there was more on-going relating to insurers and the police.

68. As regards the Service Standards (Complaint structure, point 6, page 6 of the report) it was noted that it should read two ‘working’ days for concerns to be acknowledged.

69. Council noted the report.

Disciplinary Committee

70. In his absence, Professor Crispin introduced the report on behalf of Professor Lees, the Chairman. On behalf of Council she wished the Chairman a speedy recovery. There were no comments or questions and Council noted the report.

Notices of Motion

71. There were no notices of motion.

Questions

72. No questions had been received.

Any other College business

73. There was no further College business to report.

Dates of future Council meetings

74. The dates for future Council meetings were noted. These were:

- Friday, 11 July 2014 (before the AGM)
- Thursday, 6 November 2014
- Thursday, 5 March 2015
Thursday, 4 June 2015
Thursday, 5 November 2015

75. All meetings (except the July 2014 meeting) are scheduled to commence at 10:00 am and end at 4:00 pm.

Retirements from Council

76. The President reported that there would be five retirements from Council from Royal College Day in July 2014:

- Mr Peter Robinson (elected) – 5 months
- Miss Christine Shield (elected) – 16 years
- Mrs Clare Tapsfield-Wright (elected) – 8 years
- Mrs Caroline Freedman (University representative – Edinburgh) – 9 years
- Professor Peter Lees (University representative – London) – 4 years

77. On behalf of Council, the President thanked those members for their hard work and contributions to both College and Council, listing their achievements while members of Council.

78. Besides himself, the President congratulated the two Council members who had been re-elected to Council: Mr Catlow and Ms Molyneux, and looked forward to welcoming the new incoming members at Royal College Day.

Treasurer and Membership of Committees 2014/2015

79. Private and Confidential to Council members only. Please refer to Annex A to the minutes attached.

Date of next meeting

80. The date of the next Council meeting was confirmed as the Annual General Meeting to be held at 10:00 am on Friday, 11 July 2014.

Afternoon session

24/7 Report and discussion

Report

81. This item began with the Chairman of Standards Committee (SC), Mrs Tapsfield-Wright acknowledging the huge effort to produce the report before Council and addressing the 24/7 responsibilities on the profession.
82. She stated that the SC had been asked to look at 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief and outlined the process that had been undertaken with a presentation to Council:

**Part 1:**
**Fact-finding exercise:**

**Background:**

- Chikosi case of June 2013;
- Lay Observer reports 2012 and 2013;
- this was not a consultation, views were simply asked for, whatever they were.

**Fact-finding exercise:** Phase 1 – written evidence

**Fact-finding exercise:** Phase 2 – oral evidence

- Independent report produced by a freelance journalist;
- top 3 corporates in the UK employing the largest numbers of veterinary surgeons;
- key representative organisations e.g. BVA, BEVA;
- range of individual views of vets, nurses and members of the public.

**Issues raised by fact-finding exercise:**

- strong desire to maintain the current obligation to provide 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief;
- frustration about lack of transparency by those practices that outsource their OOH work;
- reputation of the profession;
- animal welfare;
- education of owner responsibilities under welfare legislation;
- alternative views advocated allowing market forces to rule;
- frequent reference to financial issues;
- clients’ knowledge of their practice’s OOH service;
- unregistered or ‘floating’ clients;
- freedom of choice;
- home visits – taxi service, unnecessary delays.

**Other sources of evidence:**

- RCVS survey of the veterinary profession – snapshot of results taken on 7 April (not the final figures as the survey had not yet closed);

- survey of animal owners (public) by Dr Mo Gannon – alarm that 48% of pet owners were not aware that OOH cover may not be covered by their practice (44% equine) and that 46% of pet owners did not know how OOH is covered by their practice (23% equine) so there was clearly a problem with information provision and/or owner awareness;
RCVS open day (6 February 2014).

Part 2:
Review of the evidence and recommendations:

Obligation:

- general, ensuring animal welfare;
- practical issues, location, response time;
- reputation of the profession;
- level playing field.

House visits:

- ensuring animal welfare;
- calls for no obligation to visit;
- empower vets to say no;
- owners with disabilities, etc.;
- more guidance was required so it was better to start afresh rather than trying to amend existing wording – there were calls to have greater emphasis on an animal owner’s responsibilities.

Registered/Unregistered:

- should there be a distinction? There were mixed views about whether veterinary surgeons should be responsible for providing emergency first aid and pain relief to registered clients only, how would this work in practice?

- frustration about OOH plans, issues around outsourcing and information provision;
- business opportunity for practices;
- evidence highlights problems with definition;

Outsourcing:

- adequate arrangements and on-going review;
- clients need more information to make an informed choice;
- communication between primary practice and provider;
- frustration at lack of transparency.

Contingency plans and protocols:

- should we specify level of cover expected?
- Responsibility of those in senior management roles;
- Resistance to overly prescriptive advice;
- Staffing etc. appropriate to likely workload.
Continuity of care:
- concerns about excessive transfer, animal welfare implications;
- should we put a cap on transfers?
- planning and post-op period;
- clinical need vs. Convenience.

Financial matters:
- problems with owners who are unable to pay;
- owner’s expectations vs. commercial reality;
- requests to highlight euthanasia as an option;
- need for clear information about higher costs;
- many issues relating to costs for both the vet and the client.

Transfer of responsibility:
- who is responsible;
- owner’s have responsibilities under animal welfare laws;
- misconception that only vets are responsible;
- when does the responsibility start;
- request for guidance to change to expressly state that the vet only becomes responsible for the animal when it is presented to them at the practice.

Owner education:
- a lack of awareness of welfare laws;
- does the RCVS have a role to play in educating owners?
- RCVS guidance used to support owner demands;
- can RCVS guidance help vets and owners?
- a big theme running through the evidence – that owners needed to be better educated about their responsibilities.

Summary:
The committee recommended changes to the supporting guidance, not the Code of Professional Conduct. The changes would affect the guidance for both veterinarians and veterinary nurses. New guidance would be more detailed and cover more areas – in essence, a brand new chapter rather than an amended chapter.

Headlines to take away:
Recommendations:

Owners’ legal responsibilities to be highlighted alongside vets’ legal and professional responsibilities;
Obligation on vets to provide more information to clients about their OOH service;

Helping and empowering vets to decline to attend away when unnecessary or unsafe.

Discussion

83. Council praised the work undertaken indicating that it had been a considered and remarkable piece of work.

84. It was noted that:

- the definition of first aid and pain relief has to be considered in context;

- vets can say no to a home visit in reasonable circumstances, without fear of being disciplined; and that they should document the reasons;

- while being predominantly about animal welfare, SC did not want to make the guidance too prescriptive and that people should construct their own business model for 24/7, to fit their practice;

- overall, the suggested amendments to the guidance had strengthened and much improved it and should be helpful to the people ‘on the ground’.

85. One member expressed concerns that:

- there was still an obligation to provide first aid for all animals, the guidance suggested that it should be facilitated but not necessarily provided; and

- whilst agreeing in principle that a person should be responsible for the telephone advice given, consideration should be given to what could happen when veterinary nurses take calls for veterinary surgeons.

86. Along the same lines, another member commented that it had been noted that older veterinarians appeared happier to stand by their clinical judgement than younger veterinarians not long out of university.

87. The suggested new guidance was accepted in principle by Council. Council were invited to submit further comments to the Secretary of SC within the next week, before the committee have one final meeting with its current membership to finalise the guidance.

88. The President thanked the Chairman, committee and staff, for the example of constructive, considered and gathered evidence leading to revised guidance, which could be used as a model/template of how issues could be looked at in the future. He acknowledged that the sooner these matters were included in the supporting guidance to the Code to Professional Conduct the better.
89. The meeting closed.

Dawn Wiggins
Secretary, Council
020 7202 0737
d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk
Appointment of Treasurer and Committee Membership 2014/15

[Pages 18 – 22 Confidential to Council Members ONLY]
Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 11 July 2014 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA

Members:
Col N C Smith (President in the Chair)
Professor D J Argyle
Mr C T Barker*
Mr D J Bartram
Professor M Bennett*
Ms A K Boag
Dr K Braithwaite
Professor N Burrows*
Professor E Cameron
Mr D F Catlow
Mr N T Connell
Professor S M Crispin
Dr J V Davies*
Mr R Davis
Professor S Dawson*
Mr M F Elliott*
Professor G C W England*
Mr N P Gibbens*
Mr C J Gray*
Miss M O Greene
Professor M E Herrtage*
Mrs L V Hill
Mrs A K Jeffery*
Mrs R J Jennings*
Mr P C Jinman
Dr J B Johnson
Professor S A May
Ms J R Molyneux
Dr R P Moore
Mrs S Paterson
Professor J S Price
Professor S W J Reid
Mr R S Stephenson
Dr C P Sturgess
Lord Trees
Mr C W Tufnell
Dr B P Viner
Ms J Webb
Dr T H Witte
Professor J L N Wood*

*Absent

In attendance:
Mrs E Butler Chairman, Audit & Risk Committee
Mr G A Hockey Director of Legal Services & Registrar
Mrs K E Kissick Chairman, Veterinary Nurses Council
Mr N C Stace Chief Executive & Secretary

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence had been received from:

- Mr C T Barker
- Professor M Bennett
• Professor N Burrows
• Dr J V Davies
• Professor S Dawson
• Mr M F Elliott
• Professor G C W England
• Mr N P Gibbens
• Mr C J Gray
• Mr M E Herrtage
• Mrs A K Jeffery
• Mrs R J Jennings
• Professor J L N Wood

Declarations of interest

2. There were no additional declarations of interest.

Matters for decision by Council

Approval of the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2014/2015

3. The President asked Council to approve the appointment of the new Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2014/2015 as follows:

   President:  Professor S W J Reid
   Vice President:  Col N C Smith
   Vice President:  Dr B P Viner
   Treasurer:  Ms A K Boag

4. The new Presidential Team and Treasurer were approved.

Royal Charter

5. Following the unanimous vote at the Annual General Meeting earlier in the day to submit a new Royal Charter for approval by the Privy Council, the Registrar sought Council’s authority to seal a copy of the resolution to send to the Privy Council and a sealed petition to Her Majesty the Queen.

6. Council formally authorised the sealing of the documents.

Date of next meeting

7. The date of the next Council meeting was confirmed as being Thursday, 6 November 2014 at 10:00 am.

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