

Council Meeting

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 June 2025 at 10:00 am in Room 4a at 1 – 2
Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

Agenda	Classification ¹	Rationale ²
1. President's introduction	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. Apologies for absence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. Declaration of interests	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. Vetlife update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5. Minutes of previous meetings		
i. 4 March 2025 – classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3 4
ii. 13 March 2025 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iii. 13 March 2025 – classified appendix	Private / confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6. Matters arising		
a. Obituaries	Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
7. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)		
a. RCVS governance reform	Unclassified	n/a
b. Review of Charter Case Committee / Charter Case Protocol / 'mini' PIC meetings	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

c. Update to RCVS Honours and Awards	Unclassified	n/a
d. RCVS Delegation Scheme	Unclassified	n/a
e. Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 offences update	Unclassified	n/a
8. Reports of standing committees – to note <u>Please note:</u> all unclassified minutes from standing committee meetings will be found as part of the <i>following</i> meeting's papers for the respective committees, see: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/who-we-are/committees/ and navigate to the specific committee from there.		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Audit and Risk Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
d. Finance and Resources Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
e. Registration Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
f. Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
g. Veterinary Nurses Council	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
h. PIC/DC Liaison Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
9. Reports of statutory committees – to note		
a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
c. Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. Notices of motion	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. Questions	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

12. Election of Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (re-run)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. Any other College business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
15. Date of next meeting Thursday, 2 October 2025 at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon) to be held at 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
16. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)		
a. Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme	Confidential	1, 2
b. Corporate Risk Register	Confidential	1, 3
c. 2024 Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements	Confidential	1, 2
d. Registration and retention fees 2026-2028	Confidential	1
e. RCVS Audit tender process	Confidential	1, 2, 3
f. Update on major projects	Oral report Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
g. CMA update	Oral report Confidential	1, 3, 4
h. Vital signs	Confidential	4
i. Recruitment of external members - various	Private	1, 5
j. Legislative reform	Confidential	1
k. Brand and visual identity – update	Confidential	1, 3
17. Any other College business (confidential items)		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report Confidential	# TBC

b. Other business	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
18. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk		

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Terms of Reference

The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

1. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

2. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:
 - a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
 - b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
 - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
 - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
 - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
 - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
 - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
 - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
 - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
 - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
 - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
 - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
 - xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
 - xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
 - xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

How Council members work

7. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
 - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
 - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
 - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
 - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
 - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
 - f. Live the College's values;
 - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
 - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
 - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
 - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
 - k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;
 - l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	13 March 2025
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 March 2025 at 10:00 am in the Agnes Hunt / Annie Altschul Room at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Members:

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

Mr D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

*^Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

*Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

*Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

*Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

*Denotes absent

*^Denotes absent from 11:30 am

In attendance:

Mr L Bishop

Ms S Haider

Ms L Hall

Mr I A Holloway

Ms A Judd-English

Ms L Lockett

Ms C McCann

Mr B Myring

Dr L Prescott-Clements

Ms J Stetzel

Mr S Wiklund

Media & Publications Manager (open session only)

CMS Project Manager (agenda item 18c only)

People Director

Director of Communications (DoComms)

Media & Publications Officer (open session only)

CEO

Director of Operations (DoOps)

Head of Policy, Insight and Public Affairs (HoPIPA)

Director of Education (DoEd)

Head of Marketing & Digital Communications (HoMDC) (agenda item 18c only)

Assistant Registrar – Education & Registration (AsstReg) (open session only)

Guests:

Dr N T Connell

Dr R Gray

Ms N Hinchy

FRCVS, Chair Fellowship Board (open session only)

MRCVS (open session only)

MRCVS (open session only)

Mr J Loeb	<i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Ms E Rodriguez Riley	EMS student with <i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Ms J Shardlow	Chair, Audit and Risk Committee
Mr A Webb	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)
Dr L J Wilson	MRCVS (open session only)

President's introduction

1. The President welcomed guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Dr Chambers (from 11:30 am)
- Professor Jones
- Mrs McLaughlan
- Mr Wilkinson

- Dr Middlemiss (Observer)

Declarations of interest

3. Declarations of interest were received from:

- Dr Bennett: was now Veterinary Director at The Pet Euthanasia People Ltd;
- Professor Loughrey: he would become co-Chair of the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) in the summer.

Minutes

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 and they were before Council for approval.
5. There were no comments, and the minutes were agreed by a verbal vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

6. There had been no written obituaries received.
7. The College had received notification that Mr Colin Whitaker HonFRCVS had died. He was a past-President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA) and had carried out research with members of the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) into the origins of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the 1980s. He was awarded an HonFRCVS from the College in July 2013.
8. Council and guests stood for a minute silence for all members of the professions that passed since the last meeting.

Council correspondence

9. The President reported on the following matters:

Annual General Meeting 2025

10. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) would be held on Friday, 4 July 2025 at One Great George Street, Westminster. Full details would be sent out by the Events Team in due course.

RCVS Council election 2025

11. The 2025 RCVS Council election was the first year under our new Election Scheme where some changes to the format had been made, in particular to the candidate statements where candidates had been asked to answer key questions that were relevant to the role of becoming a Council member, including skills and experience.
12. This year there were 20 candidates standing for four available places: 12 men and eight women, including three existing Council members.
13. Voting had opened that week when Civica Election Services (CES), who ran the election on the College's behalf, sent emails to eligible voters with details about how to vote. All votes must be cast by **5:00 pm on Friday, 25 April 2025**. The small number of veterinary surgeons for whom the College did not hold an email address would receive a letter with instructions on how to vote, in addition to their security code to allow them access to the unique voting website; there would also be the opportunity to call CES, who were able to assist members with casting their votes.
14. Ahead of the start of the voting period, the College had invited members of the profession to submit one question to the candidates, who were then asked to respond in writing to one question of their choice. Candidate details and their answers were published on the RCVS website.

Mid-year reflections

15. Council members were thanked for attending their individual meetings and for their thoughts following the recent mid-year reflections. One of the matters that had come out from the meetings was the importance of skill set and application in roles. Conversations would be used when

considering committee population for the forthcoming year, and to create some continuum within the Presidential role even if incumbents change.

CEO update

16. The CEO introduced the update and highlighted the following:

- it had been 10 years since the College had received its 'new' Charter; the main item undertaken under the Charter was to make sure that veterinary nursing (VN) was recognised with a mandatory VN Register; since then, VNs had had to do continuing professional conduct (CPD); and they had a VN Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC). Protection of the VN title was still outstanding, although work continued to push for it;
- work launched under the Advancement of the Professions Team:
 - o Mind Matters Initiative mental health research grants: if members knew of anyone researching in that field, they should direct them to the information on the College's website;
 - o 'Let's Talk Adjustments' campaign: considering reasonable adjustments in practice; the campaign would run to the end of July and looked at myths and misconceptions and the legal requirements for employers. It was evidence-based and linked to the research done jointly with British Chronic Veterinary Illness Support (BCVIS) last year that, amongst other items, looked at the impact of disabilities and chronic illness on the veterinary team;
- the veterinary surgeon renewal period was ongoing and 35% had already paid;
- the College attended the Association of Veterinary Students Conference in Cambridge, which had been positive;
- the College had partnered with National Careers Week in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) career opportunities;
- there had been a series of Academy Live sessions. The Academy was the online portal to help vets and VNs meet the standards expected of them and the College had recently branched out into some live sessions by using some of the content to deliver webinars, for example, focusing on the Clinical Supervisor role in the community; and CPD 'record and reflect'. A new online course had recently been launched around communicating costs to clients;
- Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) Congress had been attended in January, with sessions on collaboration; under care; and workforce;
- the deadline for applications for Fellowship was the next day;
- a consultation had been launched on the new framework for veterinary nursing;

- a lot was ongoing in the Education Team:
 - o European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) had confirmed that it was a maximum of two visitors allowed on visitations for *any* observers, not just for the RCVS Team, and that a staff member would count as an observer, which could limit the ability to interact. Barcelona remained interested in RCVS accreditation and the College was awaiting the decision of the Spanish regulator on whether or not they would be attending the visit; Council was reminded that two people would be required to manage the workload;
 - o the written component of the 2025 Statutory Membership Examination diet was ongoing; it was the first year with the new Statutory Instrument in place. This year there were 272 candidates – up 38% from 2024 – from 46 different countries. Consideration was being given to further expansion and how it might be managed – the sticking point was the Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) as there was a limit to numbers that could be accommodated;
 - o the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) database had been open to providers since November and would be launched for students the following week; the College had been working with staff from the vet schools to encourage students to sign up. The database allowed students to search for animal handling and clinical placements from a wide range of different fields, and from an outreach perspective it enabled people to check public transport and accommodation; it was not to be used for feedback purposes;
- the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress was scheduled for the following week and was being held in Manchester. The College was involved in a lot of sessions: a panel about the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation; a session on the VN Visions project; research relating to workforce; Mind Matters; future activities of the RCVS – looking at the governance review / legislative reform and the CMA; and, the RCVS Strategic Plan, so it would be a busy event.

17. Thanks were given to Rosie Powley in the Events Team as she had created some excellent content for National Careers Week, which was the first time the College had taken part.

18. The update was noted.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

RCVS governance reform

19. The paper was introduced by the Chair of the Legislative Change Working Party (LCWP). There had been two meetings so far; the discussions had been robust; and a very pragmatic approach had been taken in trying to reach conclusions when striking a balance between what might be ultimately desirable, and what might be feasible. It had to be recognised that the College was not in charge of its own destiny and that decisions would ultimately be made by government about the future shape of any new Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA).

20. Key issues that the LCWP had been considering were laid out in the paper:

- lay and professional parity on Council;
- whether the Council should be more Board-like and smaller in size, with a more strategic focus, bringing it more into line with the norm among other regulatory bodies;
- issues around the balance of membership between lay members, vets, VNs, and allied professionals;
- how each profession would feed into the overall work of the Royal College;
- the idea of professional councils, reporting to the 'board' along the lines of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC), but for all professions – vets, VNs, musculoskeletal professionals (MSKs), etc. that might come under the regulatory umbrella of the Royal College;
- how to ensure there was effective input from the professions into the work of the Royal College, but not necessarily being done through the election of individuals either to the Council, Board, or committees.

21. The proposed governance model was in the paper at paragraphs 23 to 26 and outlined in the chart attached at Annex A to the paper – one chart represented the 'status quo', the other of how it might look in the future. It was important to note that some aspects of governance might be set in any future primary legislation and, before anything got near Parliament, certain items would need to be 'pinned down' for recommendation by Council – parity, size of Council, breakdown within professional groups – because it was difficult to amend once in primary legislation.

22. The details regarding overall committee structure, veterinary advisory groups, etc., the College would likely be able to decide itself as an organisation, rather than being codified in legislation. However, it needed to be able to provide satisfactory responses to Defra and to government about the direction of travel at the lower level. That might seem to be something for future determination, and work was ongoing around legislation and big questions had to be answered, and some members of the professions still needed to be persuaded of the need for change.

23. The conclusions within the Group had not been unanimous but had provided a strong steer in terms of the direction of travel.

24. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- the need for reform was understood and that something had to be presented to government, and the need for a potential governing board was accepted, but [I] was struggling with the concept that the College was always saying it was two things, that it was a regulator, and it was a Royal College. It felt like a Royal College of *something* but that it was moving away from Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons towards a more regulatory pathway, certainly some of the language indicated as such, there was little mention of the Royal College function;
- was the College moving from a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to a Royal College of Veterinary Services, or similar, if so what sort of terminology would there be and would there

be a change in community because a lot of people were very attached to their MRCVS status, it was part of their drive and professional identity;

- the RCVS as an organisation should be more inclusive of the roles of other professions, which would be a positive thing for all professions, not just for VNs or MsRCVS, nor was it about making vets less important. Within the structure of Council, the Board that was proposed already had a proposed veterinary majority structure. In terms of the regulation side, it was not about becoming a Royal College of Veterinary Services, but it had to be recognised, and it had already been decided, that the College was looking to take on more regulation than simply that of individuals, particularly with regards to practice regulation.

In terms of the Royal College functions, what the recommendations reflected was that it was not possible to separate 'Royal College' and 'regulatory' activities, as those were threaded through the work of the organisation. The Charter had to be considered because it talked about fellows, members and associates. VNs were already considered to be associates of the Royal College but they did not have the post-nominal ARCVS, even though that was what they technically were. Wholesale changes of the Charter were not being sought within the legislative report;

- in a Council meeting c. two years previous, it had been stated that the College was not a membership organisation because to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK you had to be an MRCVS, it was not optional. Anyone that qualified before 2012 stood up and gave an oath: *"Inasmuch as the privilege of membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons is about to be conferred upon me I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will abide in all due loyalty to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and will do all in my power to maintain and promote its interests. I PROMISE above all that I will pursue the work of my profession with uprightness of conduct and that my constant endeavour will be to ensure the welfare of the animals committed to my care."* The wording changed in 2012, and it no longer spoke of membership of the College being a privilege, nor did it speak of a need for loyalty to the College, only a responsibility to the public, the clients, the profession, and the College. Those people that made the solemn promise in the presence of peers, it was not the degrees that made them vets, it was the right to make the promise in public; the public statement that they were considered by their peers fit to be members of the College and to go out and practise as veterinary surgeons.

Council had spoken multiple times about the uniqueness of being a Royal College that regulated, and the difficulties of wearing two hats. It had had to 'sit on the fence' between the two roles and sooner or later was always going to have to come down on one side or the other; it was clear that the side would be that of regulator, which in itself was not necessarily wrong or a bad thing but Council should now realise that if it could not wear two hats, it should not be trying to;

- through the paper it was like the College was trying to adopt the norms in terms of regulation and, looking at other regulators, that was not a bad thing. It was, however, a Royal College

that regulated and it was *not* the norm; should it still be wearing two hats if it was trying to move towards the reform of being closer to what other regulators were achieving?

- with regards the dual role, it was felt that if Council did not move towards the regulatory norm in terms of governance, then it would end up with separate regulator like other healthcare regulators that had two separate organisations – one of regulation and one of a professional leadership. It would be useful to set out the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the new body because that would clarify exactly what the governing body was for;
- the College should 'own it' rather than having it 'done to it' because then it might have more control of what 'it' looked like. Change felt inevitable, considering CMA concerns. Just to help an understanding from the professional members that had the concern, what did they feel was being lost by virtue of what was described as the Royal College 'bit', the professional identity, through the changes because it was leading to a belief that there was somehow a link between the professional identity that vets felt with the Council itself as in the constitution of the room? The model of the oath was familiar with other professions, and it could complement the governance structure proposed.

It was potentially about the combination of governance in its formation, and where professional representation sat. It was also about having graduation ceremonies, Royal College Day, and all of those elements, so it would be good to have a better understanding from veterinary professionals of why the link was important in terms of identity and constitution;

- the paper was a good attempt at delivering a compromise. The case for the dual role could be better made, as that had led to the issue with the College function being discussed; it was clear the direction of travel was towards stronger regulation, so the case should be why it was important the College function was retained, or discussions instead should be about how to separate the two functions;
- returning to the identity point, from a veterinary nursing point of view, it took something away from a VN's identity to be regulated by another profession; the point would get stronger as other professions came under the RCVS 'umbrella'. Nothing changed in the short term, but it ultimately fed into professional identity in a negative way when you could see it potentially being taken away;
- this was extremely complicated as there were issues with the different functions that impacted on the other professions joining the College, but for veterinary surgeons the M/FRCVS was integral to who they were and what they did; it was far more than a job. Many people did not understand the complexities of what the College did, they just knew that they had worked for many years to become a member of the RCVS. Perhaps the College should talk about whether VNs and other professions becoming associated members, and how the functionality would be fulfilled whilst preserving the name and post-nominals; given that c. 30,000 vets did not understand most of the work undertaken, and they would lose the name if it became Veterinary Services, then the 'kickback' would be immense;

- it was understood that membership was really important to veterinary surgeons in terms of their identity, but if the College did not move a little bit towards regulatory best practice there was a risk that the organisation would be split up; if that happened the hard-won MRCVS would not be the thing that defined a vet any more – the more the current structure was pushed, the less likely the post-nominals MRCVS would mean ‘veterinary surgeon’ in legal terms; it would not be an identity, just a membership of a club-like structure. The individual person would be defined as a veterinary surgeon in law; being allowed to practise would be down to registered status not membership;
- discussions about what to call groups would be a discussion for another time. It should be noted that should a split of functions be chosen either by the College, or be imposed upon it, then veterinary surgeons would likely no longer have to be members of the RCVS – membership of other Royal Colleges was not mandatory – it would be a choice to make, so being a veterinary surgeon and being an MRCVS would no longer be synonymous;
- it was about recognising the conflict, and legitimate concerns of different parties. The government was concerned about regulatory best practice and needing a new VSA, so the College had to be able to meet the government at least part way on that. Fundamentally, there were the concerns about whether the College could retain being a College that regulated rather than being split into a General Veterinary Council and a separate College; concerns of the veterinary nursing profession and other associate professions that might want to be regulated; and concerns of vets themselves, where identity was a very personal thing. There was a strong argument for creating a smaller governing board that would, hopefully, deliver to the needs of the government when pushing for a new VSA; it was the other part that potentially went too far to keep the profession on board. Vets held membership by obligation, if the view was taken that the College wanted to be a membership organisation where it wanted members to join, would it support them and make them feel that they *wanted* to be members, or would it attack their identity and drive them away? It was an identity piece;
- the College had to change in order to preserve its unique structures but, as with other members, [I] was very proud of being a vet, to tell people what that entailed, and for being hugely proud of being a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary *Surgeons* – if someone made [me] change it to Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary *Services*, then [I] would give [my] certificate back because [I] felt very strongly that that was part of what [I] was (being a veterinary surgeon). Based on earlier comments, there was confidence that the Charter allowed the veterinary profession to preserve its identity and get the ‘best of both worlds’ in retaining its identity as Ms/FsRCVS and associate members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and it could reform as well;
- it would be valuable to ‘flesh out’ the paper with the ToR for each of the different sub-Councils and the Board, to make it quite clear that the College was very keen and it was integral to retain the Royal College aspect of what it did, even if it did fall under the Board. It was also dangerous to proclaim that vets were ‘not normal’; why should they think they were different to all other professions?

- for vets, and the public, to be regulated in the same way as doctors with the General Medical Council (GMC) was a huge plus point and that it was possible to check that a member belonged to a regulated profession and being deemed fit to practise; it should be framed as a positive thing;
- it was not seen as a negative that members were regulated, and there were people who chose to be MsRCVS because there were non-practising members. Under current legislation, vets had an overarching responsibility for animal welfare within the UK; VNs act under the direction of vets, as did paraprofessionals in terms of what needed to be done that fell under the VSA. It was accepted that the public needed to trust the regulation side, but with regards to the Royal College side there had been times when the government (Defra) had come to Council suggesting changes that would dilute part(s) of what a veterinary surgeon did and it had had to stand and say no, and provide reasons why, for example, it would break the principles of certification, but often it was veterinary members who were more aware of the issues. In addition, it felt as though the College was moving away from its current name and there were some issues that required consideration but it might not be as complicated as it was expected; one of the positive things was the oath type approach – a lot of health professions had lost that and, as a result, there was not the relationship with their regulatory body as a sign of status for the profession;
- the Charter stated that *'members of the College shall be persons who, on being registered in the register of veterinary surgeons in accordance with the Act, are entitled by the Act to become members of the College on being so registered'*. It followed that if you ceased to be registered, a person was no longer an MRCVS, and the Working Group had been clear that the College did not want to lose the idea of Ms/FsRCVS. One thing to bear in mind was that the proposals only added to the current situation, there was no subtraction; so there should not be a loss of identity;
- [I] liked the proposed structure as it gave the College the best of everything: the small regulatory board would align with regulatory practice; the separate Veterinary Surgeons Council lying underneath showed the College was listening to the profession and the British Veterinary Association (BVA); and it potentially gave the profession an opportunity to be involved in the regulatory process in the layer below the regulatory board;
- considering the term 'working under the direction of' was where the College was now, but it was trying to move away from that for different professions: foot trimmers, musculoskeletal, etc., who would not necessarily work under the direction of a vet; some of the discussions felt a little protectionist and 'hung up' on the words 'Royal College of...'. It had been considered from a veterinary surgeon point of view and suggested that it be turned around and considered from the other profession's point of view – for example, VNs were regulated by another profession, and it was going very well;
- the need for reform was appreciated and there were some real opportunities in the structure proposed in the paper, however, [I] was hesitant on how the groups would be made up? It had been agreed that the board would be appointed using the process for lay people and the concern was that there had been a high bar set for lay people that might appear to be too

high for your everyday vets. It was acknowledged that there were opportunities on the Councils, but how would they collaborate as each appeared separate? Clarity around the appointment process, skill sets, and expertise were needed to provide reassurance;

- the purpose of the board was to be the governing body for the organisation, to make sure money was being spent the right way and the strategy was right, not necessarily making all the detailed technical decisions about veterinary matters, as that would come from committees and there was much more scope to have different sorts of experts on those committees. To run an organisation, it was argued that you did not need people who necessarily had expertise of being a vet 'at the coalface', in the same way that you would not run a bank with bank tellers on the board;
- evidence suggested that in a Council of the current size, it was hard to reach a consensus; look at the role of governance on a governing board, then bring in the professions with expertise onto committees, and then there was the additional layer of paraprofessionals and an advisory group that could address some of the concerns being voiced. If regulation was lost, which might happen dependent on the outcome of the CMA investigation, it was worth noting that the disciplinary function would be done by the regulator, not the Royal College, as would education, and things would become expensive as a regulator would charge – members would have to pay to register – and there was the potential for tension between the two bodies, so communication was essential to bring the profession on the journey;
- the model was elegant and simple, and [I] liked the structure but what was the thinking with regards advisory groups coming into it – would each group have an advisory group?
 - a veterinary advisory group was included in the model as a concept, but the level of detail had not been worked out yet; it would be a way of trying to ensure that the voice of the profession was heard;
- hierarchy could be explained as: there was legislation that established the principles; then, importantly, there was the Charter where a lot of the professional identity came from – use of title, post-nominals, framing of membership and, ultimately, what other professions could be brought in – normally supporting that from underneath (apart from a structural diagram with ToR) were things like a scheme of delegation and other governance documents that established how decisions were made and where the duty sat. To give increased assurance to the profession about points around dilution and loss of influence was to recognise the kind of decision-making that had a duty attached to it – to consult with the profession; to take advice of established advisory groups and elements built into the framework so that the profession's voice was still heard and expertise fed back. When it came to other professions and how those voices would be heard, the level of detail was not before Council, but it existed, and it would work practically;
- historically, the profession was self-governed, that was not how it happened now, workplaces had changed; associates such as the veterinary nursing profession should be welcomed as 'siblings' not as vets 'over' VNs. To bring vets on the journey they would need significantly more reassurance that their voices would still be heard, listened to, and acted upon, not that

they would be sitting in a committee set below a board that had the option to ignore those voices;

- one of the critical issues was that Council, whatever its size, was considered the repository of expertise that governed the profession. That was not good for the organisation and ultimately not good for the profession because it traditionally relied on things such as elections; it did not necessarily bring in all different aspects of the profession(s) or different areas of practice. It had been heard before that people were not elected from the right areas or that Council was missing things – not that the wrong people were being elected, but that there was not a wide enough cross-section of the profession sitting.

The role of the board should be to ensure the right voices were input into decision-making processes – not just to *be* the process – it was about the consultation, engagement, stakeholder relations and advisory groups; it was all of those things;

- being governed alongside colleagues was not of concern and, when working day-to-day with other paraprofessionals, it was clear they knew much more on certain topics, and they would be managed within the Council groups; it was the communication between groups that Council should consider. There had also been occasions where direct feedback from the profession had had an impact. Make sure that the voices on those Councils could be heard further up the chain.

25. The President drew the discussion to a close and summarised it as looking to add to the current structure and to understand the differences between the governance assuring that strategy and processes were being followed, and the expertise in the detail that would be worked through at a later date. The primary legislative area was the way the College wanted to take the matter forward, and the identity piece was really important – the Veterinary Surgeons Council and other professional councils that sat alongside was where the voices came in and connection could be maintained. There were also other issues around the advisory group to bring those voices into the room, keep the connection, and get the right information as needed, and the importance of stakeholder engagement.

26. Council was asked to recommend full parity between lay and registrant members on the governing body. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	16
Against:	3
Abstain:	1
Did not vote:	1

27. The recommendation of full parity was agreed by a majority vote.

28. Council was asked to aim to reduce the size of Council to closer to the regulatory norm of 10-12, and for it to become a board. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	16
Against:	4
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

29. The reduction in the size of Council and for it to become a Board was agreed by a majority vote.

30. Council was asked for veterinary surgeons to remain predominant among professional members on the governing body, for VNs to have at least one member on the Board, and for allied professionals to be included (but not necessarily all allied professionals included at all times).

31. It was emphasised that veterinary surgeons to remain predominant did not mean in a majority on the Board; that the proposed structure was to try to keep some flexibility for the future; and that, as not all allied professions would be represented directly on the Board, that it implicitly had to listen to the second 'layer' of the proposed Councils in order to be able to make informed decisions as not all skill sets from all areas would be present – it would be part of its the role as the governing Board. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	20
Against:	1
Abstain:	0

32. The proposed composition of the governing Board was agreed by a majority vote.

33. Council was asked for the introduction of separate councils for veterinary surgeons, and any newly-regulated allied professions, to sit alongside VNC, and for all such councils to report to the governing body. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	19
Against:	0
Abstain:	2

34. The proposal for separate Councils to sit under the governing Board was agreed by a majority vote.

35. The President thanked Council for its deliberations and that the decisions made had provided a starting structure to work on, with more details to come in due course.

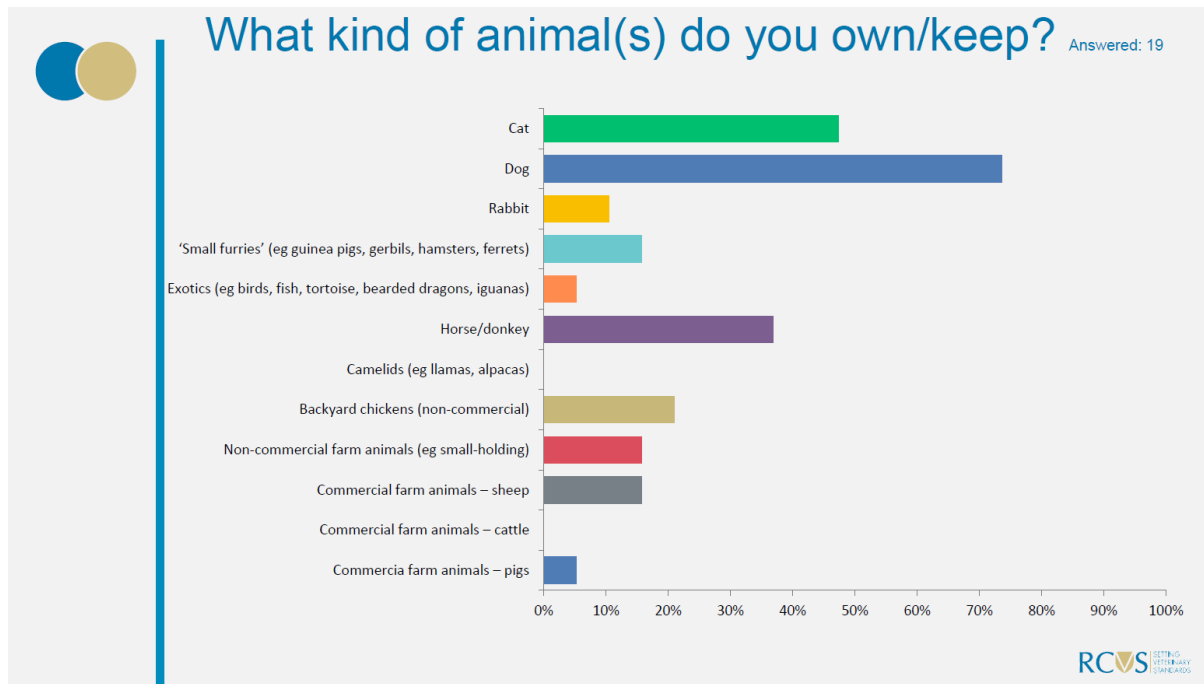
Dr Chambers left the meeting.

Review of Public Advisory Group (PAG)

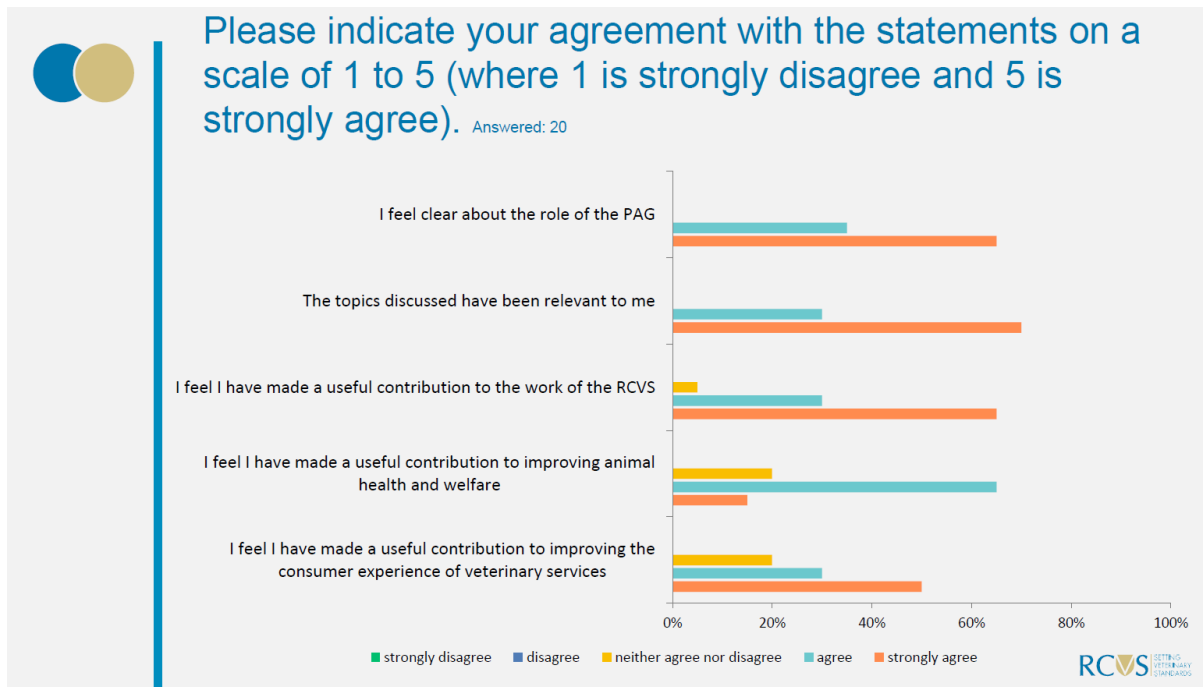
36. The Chair of PAG, Dr Allum, introduced the paper and reminded Council of the background in commencing the pilot Group in September 2023 for an initial 12-month trial, extended by six months in September 2024 to finish some ongoing workstreams. Of an initial group of 34 people, five never turned up for meetings and two had dropped out for personal reasons. At its last meeting, the Group had discussed the latest CMA papers and questioned whether it aligned with

its thinking and there had also been feedback on the draft Strategic Plan 2025-2029, both items had provided valuable feedback.

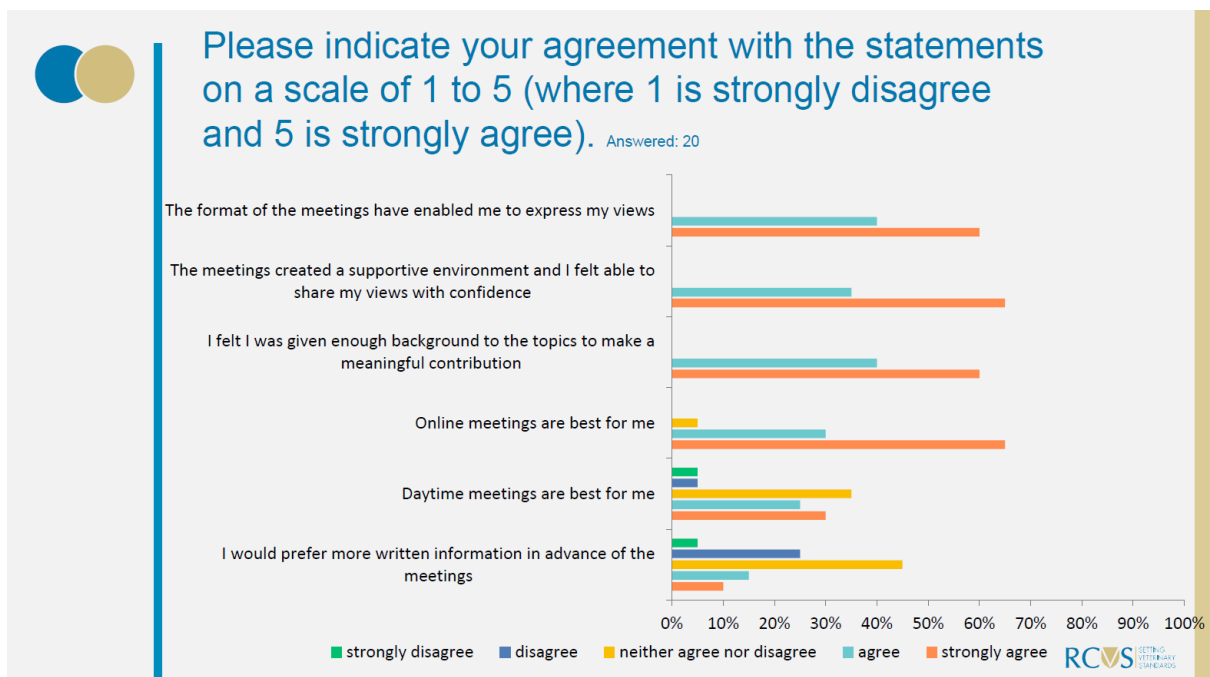
37. A brief survey had been sent out to the Group. The College had wanted to see what kind of animals people were keeping and, at the time of membership selection, it had tried to pick a broad spread of people with different animals, and it was useful to look back and see where the gaps were; exotics and dairy farmers were not particularly represented but, in general, the spread appeared fair:



38. The Group was then asked how it felt it had performed, by using a series of statements; most agreed or strongly agreed with the statements and felt they had made meaningful contributions:



39. The final part of the survey was to gather information about where improvements could be made. It had been noted at the last meeting that members were not 100% sure how useful the work was for the RCVS – they wanted to see how they were contributing, which was something to be worked on:



40. When considering the responses, there was positive feedback that the Group was working well from both its own view and that of the College. PAG fed into different committees and its annual reporting was being finalised.

41. The paper put forward the proposals that the Group should continue, particularly whilst the CMA work was ongoing; to add 10 more members, and to think about adding them in a strategic way, improving diversity and representation where there were gaps and to be careful where it was advertised in order to have as broad a voice as possible. The general consensus was that the format of the meetings worked, although forum panels on specific topics could be beneficial in the future.

42. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- animal owners were a massive angle for feedback as vets and VNs could not achieve what they needed to do without their input, so it was important for them to have the opportunity to be part of the process; from a research perspective the public stakeholder angle was really important, and they would be great advocates for what the professions could do in the future;
- it was good to see the breakdown of animal ownership but question the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the group, for example, people from different socioeconomic backgrounds; various disabilities; neurodiversity; etc. Was there room to expand and make the group even more useful because veterinary practices could be daunting places to visit;
 - o some members of the Group had physical disabilities and were good about talking to the College about how they got into the practice and any issues, but the College did need to consider socioeconomic backgrounds – that could potentially be covered in the application process and be advertised better. In terms of membership, the Group did not want all members to change at the same time so consideration should be given to staggering of appointments;
- [I] strongly support the continuation of the Group and [I] would like to see it added into the ToR of the College's committees that they make use of it in a more formally structured way;
- regarding the length of time members were on the Group for, they should not be there so long as to become 'institutionalised' as it would influence decision-making so maybe terms should be for a shorter one- to two-year period so there was churn and fresh ideas;
 - o some overlap was needed, but that could be part of the ToR for new members joining the Group;
- food production area should also be considered as it was a big part of the profession;
- EDI should run through all of the different areas of the College, and it was a perfect opportunity to do that;
 - o it was also a matter of who applied – if there were no applicants from specific areas, then they could not be chosen to join the Group. Currently, it felt like there were a lot of people who were used to being part of a Board structure and who were used to volunteering for positions, so it was about trying to reach out to people who would not normally think about doing so;

- the members had been very helpful, but broader research from the general public should be considered; PAG was a super useful tool, but it was only one tool;
- when it comes to production animals, think less about the species and more about the functionality – a commercial dairy farm was different to a person with 10 cows that produced a bit of cheese in a ‘niche’ way;
 - was a separate farm group required? Farmer voices amongst the voices of, for example, cat owners could generate a disconnect, and meetings would need to be held at different times of day. When the idea of a farm group was first floated there was considerable push back and it had been decided that it would be more useful to have a discussion across lots of different users of veterinary services, particularly because they felt they could learn something, and also because it was the purpose of the group;
- it would depend on the type of questions the group would be asked – the proposed governance reform structures offered more consultation with expertise so it could be envisaged that would be the correct place as it was also about public health and food hygiene as well;
 - there were a couple of smallholders within the Group, but they were not representative of farm producers; care had to be taken as expectations and services within production animal spheres were very different;
- the Group had been a huge success and provided an opportunity to consider how the model might be used for a veterinary advisory group, as that might allow some of the more silent voices in the profession to be heard – the College rarely hear from pig vets, for example, or vets in the Highlands and Islands, or vets with disabilities. Using the same model under the new governance structure could provide a great potential for people to be heard and for the College to be able to respond to the needs expressed;
- having a more defined ToR would be really useful to be able to balance retention and enable people to exit without causing offense.

43. The President drew the discussion to a close and thanked the Chair, PAG for the useful stakeholder engagement and for leading on the work.

44. Council was asked to approve:

- a. that the PAG should continue on a permanent footing;
- b. to adopt the proposals for change to improve effectiveness as outlined in the paper;
- c. that the President be asked to write to PAG members to thank them for taking part in the pilot and for all of the contributions they had made, to formally recognise their work so far.

45. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

46. The items outlined in paragraph 44 a-c above were agreed by a unanimous vote; it was noted that the length of terms would be refined in the ToR.

RCVS Council culture

47. The People Director introduced the paper and thanked members that had completed the Governance App survey that was generated to test the effectiveness of Boards. It was encouraging to see the positive work that the Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) had completed with the support from Council since the survey had last been undertaken in 2023.
48. It was noted that:
- there had been 17 responses received;
 - overall scores improved by c. 17 points, which was positive;
 - in 20 areas the scores showed positive improvement by at least half a point;
 - there were only two areas of the 65 questions that showed a reduction in score by at least half a point, which was not unexpected as the College was between strategic plans:
 - o Organisational purpose: we act in a way that's consistent with the RCVS's values: in 2023 = 4.16, in 2025 = **3.35**;
 - o Integrity: we have a clear set of aims and a plan for achieving them: in 2023 = 4.04, in 2025 = **3.35**;
 - it was recognised that the survey had some limitations, for example, Council had a different membership to that of 2023, when the survey was last circulated; therefore, the survey was indicative rather than absolute, which was relevant when items were considered better, worse, or the same.
49. It was proposed that the CCWG reform temporarily for a short period to consider those areas with least improvement, and Council was asked if it was appropriate to consider how those scores would be maintained in the absence of any effects of action. Further, whether the membership of the Group should also be reconsidered rather than use its pre-existing form, with the changes in overall Council membership.
50. Comments and questions included:
- it was encouraging that the trend was going in the right direction;
 - it was not clear what the Group had done;
 - o a couple of years ago Council took part in a facilitated workshop to look at the culture within it and Council effectiveness. The work was aligned with election processes for the main RCVS Council election; an updated induction process for new Council members; and updated the Code of Conduct for Council (and committee) members. See **Annex A** for the Action Plan agreed at September 2023 Council meeting. One of the outcomes

was the reflection conversations, which had been deemed the most important area, and that there should be a 'sense check' every so often of Council's performance. The questionnaire used was a standard version used by a lot of charitable organisations to provide an indication of Board effectiveness. It identified areas requiring more understanding and suggest ways of improvement to work better as a group;

- Council as a whole performed better and had better relationships through the work that had been done;
- the two items showing a negative performance value could be argued were related to being between strategy plans; suggest letting it 'sit' for six months as Council's next agenda item was the new proposed Strategic Plan 2025-2029, and then look to see what could be done;
- it would be useful to present the average for the different areas.

51. Council was asked to approve that the Council Culture Working Group temporarily reform (noting that membership might need to be adjusted). An electronic vote was taken:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

52. The reformation of the CCWG was agreed by a unanimous vote.

RCVS Strategic Plan 2025-2029

53. The CEO introduced the paper and thanked everyone for their contributions. The version of the paper was following feedback from a range of stakeholder organisations and it was noted that it was the first time comments had been sought in such a way for a strategic plan and it was a good example of what the College wanted to do around collaboration and how it was not always going to be the easiest thing to do but it should get the College to a better place.

54. It was designed to be short and 'punchy' although when asked if anything should be removed; it was interesting that nearly every stakeholder wanted to add items instead. A lot of people, including PAG members, wanted more information about what the College did, so that the plan could be put into context; further consultation with communications colleagues highlighted that a lot of the information would be unlikely to be read and that it would be more beneficial to have better signposting within the plan to the information on the College's website.

55. The first question within the plan had been largely re-written, which was why it did not have tracked changes; it also took into account the work Krow Group had been doing around branding. It had been questioned by stakeholders how the plan would be delivered, and what the timing and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be. The view had been taken that the College wanted committees to be much more engaged in delivery and take more ownership, therefore the operational plans would deal with that aspect, and the strategy plan would be more top level. Wording had also been amended from 'ambitions' and 'activities' – which was more operational – to 'ambitions' and 'aims'.

56. There had been challenges around whether the legislation piece, and the CMA piece, should be brought to the foreground. It was noted that, when Council had considered earlier iterations of the plan, it was felt that the College needed to be in control of its own destiny, not to have it entirely decided by the CMA as that was only part of the 'picture'. The College had also sought new legislation for 20 years and was looking for a series of matters under that, although the final legislation was outside of its control; some of it had been addressed by the language running through the plan about consumers.

57. Feedback was being sought on the first part of the plan, and on any specific changes to suggestions made and to the ambitions within the document. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- the language used was great, it was clear, and the plan flowed nicely;
- when reading the 'about us' section, it came across as the College being a regulator, but there was no mention of the Royal College function; it had been included lower down in the document but not in the 'about us' section;
- it was considered with the question of what was missing? Discussions had already taken place about the fact that College regulated individual vets and VNs but there was not mandatory practice regulation, that was something that might come in with a new VSA – which could be at the earliest stage of the place, a later state, or not at all. Was there any scope for including that the College worked with the employers of vets and VNs to ensure that they were set up for success so that they fulfil the requirements of the CoPC because that was where some of the conflict arose?
 - o that was quite difficult to put in the strategic plan, but they were there as stakeholder engagement and also at Ambition A: '*...will champion accessible, team-based veterinary care, delivered in settings that support professional autonomy and leadership...*'; the College had to talk to employers to consider the platform from which that work was undertaken;
- in view that it was a five-year plan and there would hopefully be a new VSA by 2029, was the College consulting with allied professionals for their views?
 - o allied professions had been removed from the draft as the College was not yet in a position to regulate them; it should also be noted that even though it was a five-year plan if there was new legislation within three years, it would require changes;
- was there any reference to sustainability?
 - o it was under Ambition C: '*...we will champion the role that professionals play in One Health and public health, take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity, and continue to look beyond our domestic horizons to have a positive impact*

on the world around us. The challenge would then be to look to the Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC) to consider how to do that;

- as it was a five-year plan did you want to directly reference the CMA? It was front and centre now, but it was hoped it would not be for the next five years. Also, it was pleasing to see the reference to public health and One Health, however, in section C4, it stated ‘...*ensure that veterinary professionals who helped to deliver public health were well supported, robust standards and safeguards.*’ That implied that only some vets were involved in veterinary public health (VPH); did it really refer to food hygiene rather than VPH, as VPH was something every vet engaged in, for instance, the focus on antimicrobials had an impact on public health? If so, could the distinction be made?
 - o this phrasing aimed to include those involved with food hygiene, border controls, disease incursion, certification of products of animal origin (POAO); the more formal public health roles for government and the work with the Certification Support Officers (CSOs), etc.; the matters that Defra asked the College to review and to make sure there were robust standards. Those were not all government roles and focus should be on what was being done to try to ensure the vets working in those roles had the support of the College; the College worked closely with government to make sure unreasonable asks were not being made.

A minor amendment was suggested to say ‘public health veterinary professionals’ to differentiate those specifically working in that field. It was argued that it was quite difficult to differentiate within the strategic plan as everyone made an impact on public health even if they did not specifically work on the official public health sphere and that Council might have to settle for the One Health concept delivery at that stage otherwise a lot more would need to be put into the plan.

It was further suggested to include: ‘...that *work* to deliver public health...’ because whilst everyone helped, they were working specifically in that area. Noted.

58. The CEO asked if the language used was acceptable as it would filter through to the website and other pieces? Comments included:

- the wording around being a Royal College should not be lost;
- some of the wording in the Charter had been extracted and put into the ‘about us’ section, but it also talked about the awarding of Fellowships and Honorary Fellowships, that was potentially missing in terms of the link to identity, that could be included;
 - o noted. What was not wanted was a list of what the College did as a regulator, and a list of what it did as a Royal College, it was more about setting and then advancing standards;
- under C3 with One Health voices, could there be reference to the educational element of the College in setting education standards, and to incorporate student bodies as well?

- noted.

59. The discussion was brought to a close.

60. Council was asked to approve the draft so that it could be designed, signed off by Officers and published. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

61. The draft RCVS Strategic Plan 2025-2029 was approved by a unanimous vote.

62. The CEO thanked Council and noted that the baton would now be passed over to committees to consider activities under an operational plan.

Reports of Standing Committees

Advancement of the Professions Committee

63. There were no comments or questions raised.

Audit and Risk Committee

64. There were no comments or questions raised.

Education Committee

65. There were no comments or questions raised.

Finance and Resources Committee

66. There were no comments or questions raised.

Registration Committee

67. There were no comments or questions raised.

Standards Committee

68. There were no comments or questions raised.

Veterinary Nurses Council

69. There were no comments or questions raised.

PIC / DC Liaison Committee

70. There were no comments or questions raised.

Reports of statutory committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee

71. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

72. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee

73. Details of individual cases were on the College website. There were no comments or questions raised.

Notices of motion

74. There had been no notices of motion received.

Questions

75. There had been no questions received.

76. Before commencing the various ballots, the President reminded Council that per the Meeting Rules 2021, the elected internal College positions were usually by secret (paper) ballot. Members who had submitted apologies for the meeting were still eligible to vote on those elections *only* and had been asked to email their votes to the Assistant Registrar (Mr Wiklund) in advance in order to maintain confidentiality in the process. Those Council members attending remotely were also asked to email the Assistant Registrar as each item was reached on the agenda.

77. The Chair had no casting vote in relation to these elections and, to be successful, a member needed more than 50% of the vote (even if there was only one person standing). The President confirmed she would hear the result at the same time as the rest of Council. It was noted that the number of votes was not recorded, only the name of the successful candidate.

78. If a member that was elected for one of the internal roles who was also standing in the main RCVS Council / VN Council elections (voted on by the profession) and was unfortunately unsuccessful, then there was the opportunity to re-run any internal election with a much-reduced timeframe at the scheduled June Council meeting. The decisions on the internal roles were made seemingly out of sequence at the March meeting annually as there was a lot of work to undertake for the next College year and it gave the incoming Vice-President a chance to put matters into place in readiness for the role.

79. It was commented that the sequence did make candidates standing in the main elections vulnerable when standing for internal roles.

Recommendation for the appoint of Officers – President and Vice-President (Senior) respectively for confirmation at the Annual General Meeting on 4 July 2025

80. The Vice-President (Senior) took the Chair for this item whilst the President and Vice-President (Junior) left the meeting to ensure procedures and oversight were followed. As the item was a recommendation rather than an election, and related to internal roles within Council, no electronic decision had been loaded, nor had it been included on the pro-forma voting form.
81. Council was asked if it wished to have a private discussion, which was declined.
82. It was reported that Officer Team had recommended, in accordance with convention, that from the AGM in July, the incoming President to be Professor T D H Parkin, and that Miss L S Belton move to become Vice-President (Senior).
83. Council agreed the recommendations by a verbal 'aye' and a show of hands.
84. The President and Vice-President (Junior) returned to the room and were congratulated.
85. The President re-took the Chair.

Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the Annual General Meeting on 4 July 2025 (taken out of order)

86. The President reported that there had been two nominations received:

Candidate:	Dr L H Allum	Mr T M Hutchinson
Supporters:	Mrs B S Andrews-Jones Mrs O D R Cook Dr M M S Gardiner Mr T J Walker	Mrs L S Belton Mrs S D Howarth Profession M D Jones Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Date of first joining Council:	July 2021 (Elected)	July 2023 (Elected)
Current term due to end:	July 2025	July 2027

87. Mr Hutchinson had circulated a letter to Council.
88. It was confirmed that members physically present would use ballot papers that had been tabled, and members joining the meeting remotely would email the Assistant Registrar with their vote to maintain confidentiality.

89. It was noted that in order to succeed a single nomination must receive more than 50% of the vote; where this did not happen, the position would be reported; the last placed candidate eliminated; and a further ballot carried out until an outright winner identified.
90. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. The candidates voted and left the room.
91. The Assistant Registrar and Director of Operations (DoOps) left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees. The candidates returned to the room.
92. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps returned to the room and reported that the vote for this role had resulted in a tie and that, per the voting rules, there would be an immediate re-run of the ballot.
93. A second ballot paper was circulated. The candidates voted and left the room. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. It was questioned if those members that had voted in absentia would have their ballot counted again, and it was confirmed that they would; the Assistant Registrar and DoOps left the room to count the ballot papers and note new email responses from remote attendees. While the count was ongoing, the President outlined the procedure that would be followed should the result of the second ballot be the same.
94. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps returned to the room and reported that the vote had resulted in a preferred candidate of the two members standing but that neither had received more than 50% of the vote; that meant, in accordance with the rules, the person with the least amount of votes would be eliminated and a further ballot taken for the remaining candidate to check that they received more than 50% of the vote as the only candidate. It was explained that there were Council members in attendance earlier that were no longer in attendance, and they had not provided any votes but who were still counted in terms of the requisite majority needed to be successfully elected. It was questioned if the members that had left the meeting had been contacted for their vote(s), and it was confirmed that they had not been, as they had been given the same opportunities as other absentee members to provide votes by alternative means and had not done so, and that it could be seen as manipulative if that was done; Council was advised against doing so.
95. It was confirmed that Dr Allum had therefore been eliminated, and the vote was for Mr Hutchinson only and members were asked to indicate the candidate's name or to write abstain on the paper. It was questioned what would happen if they should fail to reach a majority; it was confirmed that there would be a re-run of the ballot at the scheduled June meeting following a much-shortened timeframe to provide a further opportunity for members to stand for this role.
96. A third ballot paper was circulated. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps left the room to count the ballot papers and note new email responses from remote attendees.
97. The Registrar and DoOps returned to the room, and Mr Hutchinson was congratulated on his successful election as Vice-President (Junior) subject to confirmation at the AGM.

98. The President thanked Council for its patience while the process was worked through.

Election of Treasurer – recommendation for confirmation at the Annual General Meeting on 4 July 2025 (taken out of order)

99. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate:	Dr M M S Gardiner
Supporters	Dr L H Allum Mrs O D R Cook Mrs S D Howarth Dr S Paterson
Date of first joining Council:	July 2021 (Elected)
Current term due to end:	July 2025

100. It was noted that in order to succeed a single nomination must receive more than 50% of the vote.
101. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. The candidate voted and left the room.
102. The Assistant Registrar and Director of Operations (DoOps) left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees. The candidate returned to the room.
103. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps returned to the room, and Dr Gardiner was congratulated on her successful re-election as Treasurer for the College year July 2025 – July 2026, subject to her re-election to Council and confirmation at the AGM thereafter.

Other elections (taken out of order)

Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

104. No nominations for the Chair, APC were received by the deadline for submissions. The item would be re-run at the scheduled June Council meeting with a much-shortened timeframe to provide a further opportunity for members to stand for this role. Paperwork would be forwarded to Council once the results of the main RCVS Council elections were known at the end of April.

Chair, Education Committee (EC)

105. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate:	Professor T D H Parkin
Supporters:	Mrs S D Howarth Mr T M Hutchinson Professor M D Jones Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Date of first joining Council:	July 2021 (VSC appointed)
Current term due to end:	July 2025

106. It was noted that in order to succeed a single nomination must receive more than 50% of the vote.

107. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. The candidate voted and left the room.

108. The Assistant Registrar and Director of Operations (DoOps) left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees. The candidate returned to the room.

109. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps returned to the room, and Professor Parkin was congratulated on his successful re-election as Chair, EC for the College year July 2025 – July 2026, subject to his re-appointment to Council by the Vet Schools Council.

110. It was questioned whether there was a Vice-Chair of EC, as Professor Parkin would become President subject to confirmation at the AGM in July and would have a really busy year; as such, the Education Team should be supported if he was away on Presidential duties. It was confirmed that there was a Vice-Chair of EC and the person in that role for the forthcoming College year would be agreed at the first meeting of the committee post-RCVS Day.

Chair, Standards Committee (SC)

111. The President reported that there had been one nomination received:

Candidate: Mrs O D R Cook

Supporters: Miss L S Belton
Ms L Ford
Dr A J McLeish
Dr S Paterson

Date of first joining Council: July 2022 (Elected)

Current term due to end: July 2026

112. It was noted that in order to succeed a single nomination must receive more than 50% of the vote.
113. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. The candidate voted and left the room.
114. The Assistant Registrar and Director of Operations (DoOps) left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees. The candidate returned to the room.
115. The Assistant Registrar and DoOps returned to the room, and Mrs Cook was congratulated on her successful election as Chair, SC for the College year July 2025 – July 2026.

Any other College business

November 2025 Council meeting

116. It was noted that the dates for the London Vet Show had been confirmed as 20-21 November 2025, which clashed with the scheduled in person Council meeting to be held in London. There was a discussion around how many people it would affect and / or their practices and noted that the meeting would still be quorate so it would remain as scheduled.

Risk Register, equality and diversity

117. There were no items raised to add to the College's Risk Register from the open session of the meeting.

Date of next meeting

118. The next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 5 June 2025, commencing at 10:00 am and reconvening in the afternoon. The meeting would be held in person.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)

Update on major projects

119. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 2.

CMA update

120. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 3 – 14.

RCVS website project update

121. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 15 – 39.

Statutory Membership Examination Appeals Procedures (taken out of order)

122. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 40 – 46.

Legislative change

123. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 47 – 52.

Standard indemnity

124. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 53 – 56.

Audit and Risk Committee recruitment – update (Private)

125. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 57 – 59.

RCVS Honours and Awards 2025 (Private)

126. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 60 – 66.

Any other College business (confidential items)

Classified appendices from Council or committee meetings

127. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 67.

Other business

128. There was no other business to report, as noted in the classified appendix at paragraph 68.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

129. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 69 – 70.

130. The meeting was brought to a close.

Annex A

Council Culture Working Group action plan agreed by Council on 7 September 2023 (Agenda item 06c, Annex C)

(Updates since meeting in [blue](#).)

Theme		Actions agreed to date	Next steps/timing	Action owner	Final approval
Code of conduct	Update of complaints process	New process agreed at November 2022 Council meeting.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Review of Code of Conduct	Revised Code including updated Nolan Principles, consistency with Council's 'How We Work' statement and other minor amendments agreed by Council June 2023.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Consistency in handling conflicts of interest	Develop flowchart for Council/Committee chairs to handle conflicts of interest consistently	Referred back to Executive for further development Discussed at November 2023 Council meeting and 'Decision Tree' approved. Complete	Lizzie Lockett	Council
Skills	Skills development	Survey completed by Council members and results reviewed by Working Group. Priorities identified included duties of non-executives, finance and team working/board dynamics.	Executive to plan training programme across priority areas and identify resource requirements. Ongoing activity	Lisa Hall/Lizzie Lockett	

	Committee Chair training	Training provider identified. Training to be offered to anyone considering a chair role.	Complete	Lisa Hall	
	Reflection sessions for Chairs and President	Light-touch, developmental approach to annual reviews for all Council members agreed by Working Group.	Scheme to be considered by Council September 2023. Further work required on timings and also on roll-out to committee members. Confidential reflection session now at the end of every Council meeting (does not get minuted); President meets with members individually annually to discuss the year to date; new members have a catch up part way through their first year. Complete	Lisa Hall	Council
	Reflection model for all Council members				
	OPQ questionnaire	Use of OPQ questionnaire (or similar) to be incorporated as part of reflection process for Council and Committee member annual performance/development reviews.	Not progressed	Lisa Hall	
	Whole Council evaluation	Governance App questionnaire adapted for use by RCVS and completed by all Council members. Working Group held discussion on findings.	Full findings to be discussed at September Council meeting in closed session Complete	Lisa Hall	Council
Elections	Updating of Statutory Instrument	Defra has agreed to email ballot proposal for a further year.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council

	Develop updated nominations form	Draft new election scheme to ensure greater flexibility as well as independence of challenge panel agreed by Council June 2023.	Registrar to progress with Defra Privy Council approved new Election Scheme 23 February 2024. Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Update 'job spec'	Minor changes made to candidate documentation for 2023 elections. Working Group agreed that further development of communications materials/website to be progressed for 2024 elections.	Further development of candidate materials and website (including downloadable pack) by Executive in time for 2024 elections. New Election Scheme not in place in time for 2024 elections, so pack updated for 2025 election. Complete.	Eleanor Ferguson/Ian Holloway	
	Communication in nomination period	Working Group reviewed activity at April and May meetings.	Ongoing activity	Ian Holloway	
Induction	Learning activities for Council members	Priority areas identified – see above.	See above Ongoing activity		
	Review induction	Working Group reviewed induction programme and made suggestions for incorporation into future programmes.	Executive action Overhauled induction process in place summer 2023, minor updates July 2024.	Lisa Hall	

			Complete		
Council visibility	Implementation of agreed activities	Working Group updated on activities and provided feedback at April meeting.	Complete	Ian Holloway	
	Review and update activities				

Obituary

Remembering Professor Allen Goodship BVSc PhD MRCVS, Emeritus Professor of Anatomy:

We are saddened to share the news of Professor Allen Goodship's passing on 16 April. A respected colleague, Allen was internationally recognised for his pioneering research in bone biomechanics and skeletal adaptation that advanced both human and veterinary medicine. Notably, he participated in a project aboard the MIR space station, investigating the effects of microgravity on bone health. Allen held senior academic positions at Bristol, UCL, and the Royal Veterinary College, and continued his work well into retirement. Allen was also a keen beekeeper, once likening the behaviour of bees to academic leadership remarking that "you think you are in control but actually the bees do exactly as they please". He leaves a lasting legacy through his contributions to orthopaedic science and mentorship.

Tim Parkin BSc, BVSc, PhD, DipECVPH, FHEA, FRCVS
Head of School
Professor of Veterinary Epidemiology
Bristol Veterinary School
University of Bristol

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	Governance
Summary	The paper sets out some questions in relation to non-practising registers and the future of the presidency and chair of Council.
Decisions required	<p>Council is asked to consider:</p> <p>a) The options in respect of replacing the non-practising and overseas registers set out in pars 2 – 10.</p> <p>b) The options for separating the chair of Council from the presidency set out in pars 11 – 18.</p>
Attachments	
Author	<p>Ben Myring Policy & Public Affairs Manager b.myring@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

RCVS governance reform

Introduction

- 1) The paper sets out some questions in relation to the non-practising and overseas registers, and the presidency and chair of Council and/or a future governing board in any future reform, and asks the Council for its views at this stage. Council will be presented with more detailed options for decision at a later stage.

'Licence to practise', non-practising/overseas registers, and 'Membership'

- 2) The Law Commission's 2014 report on the regulation of health and social care professionals, and the government's response to it, argued that Registers and the use of associated titles should only be for those who intend to practise and are fit to practise – i.e. complying with CPD and any other revalidation requirements. This is to ensure clarity and assurance for the public. This was confirmed in the subsequent 'Regulating healthcare professionals, protecting the public' consultation and response of 2021-23. It is similarly the norm that use of professional titles, e.g. veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse, should only be used by those on the (practising) register.
- 3) Of all regulators, only the RCVS and the General Medical Council (GMC) are out of step with this by allowing none-UK-practising individuals to remain on the register long term (a minority allow for short career breaks, e.g. maternity leave). The RCVS overseas-practising register currently holds 3,880 individuals, the non-practising register 2,462, and the practising 70+ register (which involves no fee), holds 1,389. It should be noted that there is no formal legislative underpinning for these registers, either in the VSA or in the Royal Charter.
- 4) The GMC register includes medical practitioners without a licence to practise. However, the most recent government recommendations in 2023 specifically called for the GMC's registration provisions to be brought into line with other regulators, creating a single register¹. Notably, Physician Associates and Anaesthesia Associates were not given any form of non-practising register under the latest GMC legislative reform Order of 2024, and the GMC expect that this will be the model for future reform of the doctor's register if, as anticipated, Medical Act 1983 is replaced in the Parliamentary term; the 2024 Order was designed as a template for all future healthcare regulation legislation, following extensive consultation with all regulators.
- 5) In the RCVS's case this is complicated by the Royal Charter, which makes Membership of the RCVS (and through bye-laws the postnominals MRCVS²) synonymous with being on the Register. If best practice is followed, and registration becomes synonymous with a licence to practise, then it would

¹ 'Regulating healthcare professionals, protecting the public' 2023, p90
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee19508fa8f56139fc0c96/Regulating-healthcare-professionals-protecting-the-public-consultation-response-analysis.pdf>

² "Those made Fellows of the College may use the post-nominal letters FRCVS. Other members may use the post-nominal letters MRCVS."

not be possible to preserve a non-practising or overseas register (at least as subsets of the main, statutory register) or allow retired people to use MRCVS or call themselves a veterinary surgeon (though 'retired veterinary surgeon' would likely be acceptable). Under current guidance use of the courtesy title 'doctor' must also be linked to use of 'veterinary surgeon' or 'MRCVS', and so this courtesy title would no longer be usable for those without a licence to practise.

- 6) However, it may be possible to alleviate this through the power in the Royal Charter that allows for the creation of new classes of Associate. The RCVS could seek a new bye-law that created a new 'alumni' status for those without a licence to practise but who wished to remain associated with the RCVS. Consideration would need to be given to which postnominals would be appropriate for non-practising individuals (including retired and overseas-practising veterinary surgeons). Possibilities could include:

- a) MRCVS (retired)
- b) MRCVS (unregistered)
- c) A[ssociate]RCVS

- 7) RCVS guidance could then be amended to allow the use of 'Dr' on association with the new postnominals. The title 'Veterinary surgeon' should not be used, but it would not be in the public interest to prosecute someone describing themselves as a 'retired veterinary surgeon'.
- 8) Alternatively, Council may conclude that it would be better to simply maintain one register in line with other regulators, and those wishing to use professional titles and postnominals would need to meet their CPD and any other revalidation requirements as with other professions (though a reduced rate for those demonstrably retired, on maternity leave, etc could be explored).
- 9) The Legislative Change Working party considered this matter. It was noted that veterinary nurses do not have a non-practising register. It was suggested that removing the non-practising register would likely result in many people moving back to the practising register in order to retain their professional title. It was argued that there is no public interest for a non-practising register, but that some form of 'alumni' status would be useful for those who chose to make use of it, not least to allow the RCVS to reach out to retired veterinary surgeons in emergency situations. It was suggested that the attachment to MRCVS status that makes the non-practising register appealing may be disproportionately favoured by older generations of veterinary surgeons. Overall, the Working Party felt that an 'on/off' Register was preferable, regardless of any financial implications, but that an impact assessment should determine whether there would be a disproportionate impact on any one demographic. However, it also felt that options for a non-practising 'Associate' status should be explored, at least as part of a transitional period, in part because it could help to smooth the path of new legislation.

- 10) Council is asked for its views on whether:

- a) the non-practising register should be removed altogether if and when new legislation is introduced, subject to the conditions outlined above;
- b) or whether a formal Associate status for non-practising and overseas veterinary surgeons under the Royal Charter should be explored.

The chair and the presidency

- 11) RCVS Council has explored the possibility that the chair of Council and the presidency of the RCVS should be separated, but as yet has reached no decision on a recommendation.
- 12) For other regulators it is usual for the chair to be directly appointed to that role, rather than elected by the Council/board. It is also often the case that the chair either can or must be a lay person (note that the VSA 1966 does not restrict the presidency to professional members, but no lay person has ever stood for the role). The RCVS will need to decide whether it recommends moving to direct appointment of the chair, or whether the chair should continue to be elected by the Council/Board. It will need to do this in the context of the College's governance recommendations to date, through which there could eventually be as few as three veterinary surgeons on Council.
- 13) The roles of President and Vice-President as referred to in the Charter, which may increase the likelihood of them being retained in primary legislation (assuming the RCTR model is retained). The RCVS needs to decide whether to recommend that the role of President and the role of chair of Council/the board should remain one and the same. If in future the chair is appointed to that position for a multi-year term, then retaining the combined role would mean that the length of presidential terms would be extended, and the President could be a lay person. Multi-year terms could be beneficial for continuity.
- 14) Dividing the role could allow for the chair of the board to be appointed for their skills and experience for multi-year terms, while retaining an annual presidential term with a junior and senior Vice-President. These presidential positions could be elected by the board, or by an electoral college representing the professional councils sitting below the board. However, it is not clear what this role would be for beyond ceremony, and there could be a risk of public conflict between the President and chair.
- 15) Another solution could be for the appointed chair to retain the ceremonial title of president, with the Vice-Presidents either being likewise appointed or elected (whether restricted to professional members or not, and either by the board or by an electoral College) as honorary deputies.
- 16) The Legislative Change Working Party considered this matter. There was agreement that the Chair could be appointed for, say, three-year terms, and it was noted that it is the norm for chairs to be appointed separately to the rest of the board. It was agreed that there should be a separate ceremonial President (with responsibilities including taking the oath at graduation ceremonies).

- 17) There was no agreement on how the president should be chosen. One suggestion was that it could be drawn from the 'Veterinary Surgeons Council' which, it had already been agreed, would sit below the regulatory Board. It was noted that this might restrict the presidency to veterinary surgeons, whereas in their it could currently be a lay person or veterinary nurse. A separate suggestion was that the president could be drawn from the Fellowship. Others suggested that the Presidency should be open to any profession. It was agreed that these options should be worked up in more detail for further discussion.
- 18) Council is asked for its views on this question, prior to more detailed options being drawn up.

Summary

Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	Proposal for future awards
Classification	Unclassified
Decisions required	<p>To consider proposals from the Nominations Subcommittee for a revision of the RCVS Honours and Awards, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rename the Impact award the Change-maker award, to reduce confusion with the Inspiration award • Add a new Collaboration award, to reflect the new strategic plan • Reduce the number of awards given in each category, to balance the introduction of a new award • Change the composition of the Nominations Subcommittee to better reflect skills required
Attachments	<p>Annex A – criteria for each of current awards</p> <p>Annex B – number of nominees for current awards over the last five years</p>
Author	<p>Lizzie Lockett, CEO</p> <p>Antalena Alexandre, EA to the CEO, Secretary to the Nominations Subcommittee</p>

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Proposal for future RCVS Honours and Awards

Background

1. Each year, the RCVS bestows a range of honours and awards. For reference, the criteria for each of these is included in Annex A. The purpose is multifaceted – to celebrate outstanding achievements, to underline the College's values and areas of focus, to highlight the influence of the profession and its 'public good', and to create a network, particularly with the Honorary Associateship, of people who may be willing to support the College.
2. The awards are updated from time to time, usually in line with a new strategic plan or a new area of work for the College. The list was last updated in 2021, with the addition of the Compassion and Student Community awards.
3. At its judging meeting in January 2025, the Nominations Subcommittee (NS) agreed that it was time to review the list of awards again to ensure that they continued to reflect the priorities of the College, the areas of interest of the profession (indicated via nominations), were clearly differentiated from those offered by other organisations (and from each other) and were of a suitable number. The NS met on 8 May to discuss options, and is now making proposals to Council for change.
4. The changes include:
 - a. Renaming the Impact award the Change-maker award, to reduce confusion with the Inspiration award
 - b. Adding a new Collaboration award, to reflect the new strategic plan
 - c. Reducing the number of awards given in each category, to balance the introduction of a new award
 - d. Changing the composition of the Nominations Subcommittee to better reflect skills required
5. In addition, some recommendations were made for practical changes to the process to help streamline and improve it. These changes, while agreed, are not being brought before Council as they are operational in nature.

Existing awards

6. As can be seen from the table in Annex B, the number of nominations for the awards varies and there seems to be no clear pattern here. There have been some years when no awards have been given out in some categories – either because there were no nominations at all, or there were none of suitable quality – and others with an abundance of entries. It is not easy to recommend the discontinuation of any particular award on the basis of 'lack of interest' looking at this data. It could be argued that the Student Community Award performs less well, but given the importance that the College places on building student engagement, it was agreed to improve communication and awareness of the Award, rather than discontinue it.
7. One area of confusion in the past has been between the Impact and Inspiration awards – both beginning with 'I' does not help. The former is more for clinical or research work, whereas the latter is more about the nominee's effect on people. However, traditionally there has been

confusion and it has not been uncommon for someone to be moved from one category to another. There has also been a concern latterly that the Impact award is being used to promote veterinary businesses rather than personal endeavour.

8. It is suggested that the Inspiration award remain as is, and that the Impact award be renamed the 'Change-maker' award and that it is more specifically tied to research or clinical work, with new wording as follows:
 - a. **Current wording:** *The award will be bestowed upon a vet or RVN who has recently made a considerable impact that has affected the profession at large, animal health or welfare, or public health.*
 - b. **Suggested new wording:** *The award will be bestowed upon a vet or RVN, or a vet- or RVN-led team, that has recently made a considerable impact in terms of clinical or research work, that has led to a profound change in the professions at large, animal health or welfare, one health, or public health. This could include practice-based research, providing it has received appropriate ethical approval.*
9. As indicated in the revised wording above, it is suggested that the Change-maker award could be given to individuals or (new) teams, which may reduce some of the issues we have had in the past where one member of a team has been singled out for an award.

New award

10. It is recommended that an additional award be added, for collaboration, to reflect the new strategic plan.
11. Again, this would not be for an individual, but a group who have collaborated to achieve something together. The nominated group would have to include at least one veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse, but could otherwise include a range of people, including animal owners, policy makers, charity workers etc. Proposed wording as follows:
 - a. **Suggested wording:** *The Collaboration Award will recognise a project that involves more than one individual, organisation or group, that has made a difference to the veterinary professions, animal health or welfare, one health or public health, through working together in a structured way. The nominated team must include at least one RCVS-registered veterinary professional.*
12. The NS also suggested that the Fellowship be contacted to see if it wished to sponsor a new award – this is yet to be followed up and is likely to be most appropriate for introduction in 2026.

Number of awards

13. As we are adding one award, and not taking any away, there is a risk that the awards ceremony becomes too long and unwieldy. To counter this, it is proposed that we streamline the number of each category of award given out. The proposal is for one award in each category apart from Honorary Associate, where we could still award up to three, as that category attracts a very wide diversity of nominations.

14. It is recommended that we would still only retain nominations in the 'pool' for more than one year in the two 'top' categories ie Golden Jubilee (VN) and Queen's medal (vet).
15. In the future, it may be relevant to allow other allied professionals who may come under the RCVS umbrella to be nominated, or nominate, or for new awards to be introduced to reflect the wider team.

Nominations Subcommittee

16. Generally, the composition of anything below Committee level is not included in the delegation scheme that Council approves, instead being approved by the relevant 'parent committee'. However, as the NS reports to Council, it is included, albeit in summary, as follows:
 - a. *The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).*
17. Discussion took place at the May meeting of the NS regarding the appropriateness of this composition for the task in hand. It was felt that having the NS largely comprising Officers was not appropriate, as it was no guarantee of relevant expertise or spread of experience across the group. It was instead suggested that a new composition be recommended, including people who are relevant for the awards being judged, for example, the Mind Matters Taskforce Chair would bring relevant experience to bear for the Compassion award. The Chair of the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel would bring useful experience for the Change-maker award. They may not always be Council members. It is suggested that CEO remain chair of the NS, to ensure that College values were kept in mind throughout the process.
18. Proposed new wording for the delegation scheme (also being discussed at the June meeting of Council) is as follows:
 - a. *The **Nominations Subcommittee** will propose who will be awarded College honours and awards (recommendations will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).*
 - b. *It will comprise:*
 - i. *Two members of the Veterinary Nurses Council, one with an educational background and one clinical*
 - ii. *Three veterinary members of RCVS Council, covering small animal, equine, large animal and public health sectors (or sourced from outside Council if necessary)*
 - iii. *A Veterinary Schools Council appointed member of RCVS Council*
 - iv. *The Chair of the Mind Matters Taskforce*
 - v. *The Chair of the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel*
 - vi. *The CEO (Chair)*
 - vii. *The Director of Advancement of the Professions*
19. If Council is amenable to this change in principle, then specific recommendations for individuals to be included will come to Council by email over the next few weeks as part of the wider committee roles document (currently under preparation by the Junior Vice-President and CEO).

Decisions to be made

20. Council is asked to approve the following:

- a. Renaming the Impact award the Change-maker award, to reduce confusion with the Inspiration award
- b. Adding a new Collaboration award, to reflect the new strategic plan
- c. Reducing the number of awards given in each category, to balance the introduction of the new award (if agreed, at (b))
- d. Changing the composition of the Nominations Subcommittee to better reflect skills required

Annex A – criteria for current awards

- No current RCVS or VN Council members can be nominated for any award
- No current RCVS or VN Council members can nominate, except for the Honorary Associateship, two out of three of which can be nominated in this way
- Supporting statements can be supplied by anyone, excluding current RCVS or VN Council members (other than for Hon Assoc)

Award	Criteria	Who can be nominated?	Who can nominate?	Self-nomination?	How many given?	Comment
Queen's medal	This Award recognises a veterinary surgeon who has achieved a highly distinguished career and whose outstanding achievements deserve recognition.	MRCVS	MRCVS RVNs	No	One	Retain all noms for further two years
Golden Jubilee	The Award is aimed at veterinary nurses who have had a sustained and distinguished career, who can demonstrate a leadership role within the profession and who can act as an ambassador for the value of veterinary nurses and their work.	RVN	MRCVS RVNs	No	One	Retain two runners up for further two years, if score over five
Hon Assoc	Honorary Associateship is awarded to non-veterinary laypeople in recognition of the special contribution they make to the veterinary sphere. Previous recipients have included scientists, lecturers, educationalists, charity-workers, journalists, farriers, farmers and those involved in the commercial field.	Lay people (NB excludes temp reg)	MRCVS RVNs members	No	Up to three	Council noms can only account for up to two of the three winners
International	This award was bestowed on veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses or laypeople who have worked internationally, from either within or outside the UK, and have made an outstanding contribution on issues that are in line with the RCVS mission, for example, around raising veterinary standards, veterinary education, improving animal health and welfare, developing leadership, promoting mental health and welfare.	Vets (not nec MRVS) VNs (not nec RVNs) Lay people	MRCVS RVNs	Yes	Up to two	

Award	Criteria	Who can be nominated?	Who can nominate?	Self-nomination?	How many given?	Comment
Impact	The award is bestowed upon a vet or VN who has recently made a considerable impact that has affected the profession at large, animal health or welfare, or public health.	MRCVS RVN	MRCVS RVNs	Yes	Up to two	
Inspiration	The award is bestowed upon a vet or VN who has demonstrated the ability to inspire and enthuse others consistently throughout his or her career.	MRCVS RVN	MRCVS RVNs	Yes	Up to two	
Compassion	This award is bestowed on someone at any stage of their career who has demonstrated compassion towards fellow professionals and/or members of the animal-owning public. This may be as part of a one-off initiative or sustained over a longer period of time, but the individual needs to have made a significant impact and shown genuine compassion above and beyond what might have been expected of them as part of their day-to-day work.	MRCVS RVN	MRCVS RVNs	Yes	Up to two	
Student Community	This award recognises veterinary or veterinary nursing students who have made a real effort to support their fellow students and the wider veterinary/veterinary nursing school community. It may also reward someone who has contributed to the wider local community within which the academic environment is based.	Anyone enrolled on RCVS-accredited vet or VN programme or studying for relevant post-grad qual	MRCVS RVNs	No	Up to two	

Annex B – Nominations for RCVS Awards – numbers of nominees over last five years

	Queen's	Golden J	HonAssoc	International	Impact	Inspiration	Compassion	Student	Total
2025	5	7	3	6	8	11	4	0	44
2024	6	13	5	6	7	9*	3	0	49
2023	4	3	0	2	4	4	0	2	19
2022	6**	3	3	1	8***	3	2	3	29
2021	6	1	4	1	2	5****	2	11	32

NB these are the number of nominees not the number of nominations – it is not unusual to receive more than one nomination for the same person

*moved one nominee to become winner of Impact award instead

**moved one nominee to become winner of Inspiration award instead

*** moved one nominee to become winner of International award instead

*** moved one nominee to become winner of Impact award instead

Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	Proposed updates to Scheme of Delegation from Council to Committees
Classification	Unclassified
Summary	This paper recommends changes to the Delegation Scheme to bring it up to date – presented as tracked changes. Please ignore any formatting or numbering issues that have arisen due to the track changes, these will be resolved in the final edit.
Decisions required	To approve the recommended changes.
Attachments	Annex A – updated Delegation Scheme, based on previously-agreed version with track changes
Author	Lizzie Lockett / CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0725

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Proposed updates to Scheme of Delegation from the RCVS Council to committees

Background

1. Under a combination of the Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act, the Council of the RCVS has a range of responsibilities to discharge. It delegates many of these to a series of committees, some of which are statutory and some 'standing'. In turn, many of those committees delegate to subcommittees, working parties and other groups, some of which are permanent, and others mounted on a 'task and finish' basis.
2. The Scheme of Delegation gives an overview of the role of Council and outlines the Terms of Reference of the main committees to which Council delegates.
3. This is generally reviewed on an annual basis by Council in June – although changes can be made and approved at any time, if necessary.
4. The current (2024) version is attached at Annex A with proposed changes, which have been tracked for ease.
5. The Scheme does not include anything below committee level, where Terms of Reference are agreed by the sponsoring committee rather than Council. These are available on the RCVS website for reference.
6. Who sits on which committee (and other subsidiary groups) is reviewed each year, to take effect at the start of the new presidential year (after RCVS Day). The current review is a work in progress, with some decisions dependent on the outcome of the election for Chair of Advancement of the Professions Committee in June. It will be circulated to Council for ratification by email, before RCVS Day (4 July 2025).
7. Please note that changes to the Audit and Risk Committee's (ARC) Terms of Reference will come to Council in October, after further review at the 4 September ARC meeting.

Decision required

8. Council is requested to approve the amended Scheme at Annex A, or suggest further amendments, as appropriate. If proposed further amendments are significant, they would go back to the relevant committee for discussion.

Annex A: 2024 Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees, with tracked changes for approval by Council on 5 June 2025.

Operative date

1. The following delegations shall have effect from xxx 2024.

The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

2. Our vision is ~~to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud~~ always to be ambitious and compassionate, working collaboratively to build trust and inspire all veterinary professionals to succeed.

Commented [LL1]: Taken from the new strategic plan, as approved by Council in March 2025

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

3. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:
 - a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
 - b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
 - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
 - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
 - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
 - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
 - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
 - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
 - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
 - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
 - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
 - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;

- xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
- xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
- xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

- 4. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
- 5. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. The appointment of the Registrar will be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
- 6. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
- 7. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

How Council members work

- 8. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
 - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
 - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
 - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
 - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
 - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
 - f. Live the College's values;
 - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
 - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
 - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
 - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;

- k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;
- l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members.

9. This scheme outlines how Council's functions are currently delegated.

Committees

10. There shall be the following statutory and non-statutory disciplinary and investigation committees, and appeals committees:

- the Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee (appeals committee);
- the Charter Case Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
- the Disciplinary Committee (statutory committee);
- the Examination Appeals Committee (appeals committee);
- the Preliminary Investigation Committee (statutory committee);
- the Registration Appeals Committee (appeals committee)
- the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
- the Veterinary Nurses Disciplinary Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee); and,
- the Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee (appeals committee).

11. There shall be the following standing committees:

- the Advancement of the Professions Committee;
- the Audit and Risk Committee;
- the Education Committee;
- the Finance and Resources Committee;
- the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee;
- the Registration Committee;
- the Standards Committee; and,
- the Veterinary Nurses' Council.

12. The standing committees shall report to Council and shall be constituted and work within the terms of reference set out below. Their Chairs will be elected by Council unless the Chair is role-based (for example, Treasurer for Finance and Resources Committee, incoming JVP for three years for PIC/DC Liaison), with the exception of VN Council, which will elect its own Chair. The Chairs of the standing committees, with the exception of the VN Council, shall be members of RCVS Council, and could be MRCVS, RVN or lay. The Chair of VN Council may or may not be made a member of RCVS Council. The Chair of VN Council will be an RVN, either elected or appointed. The Chairs of the statutory and non-statutory disciplinary, investigation and appeals committees shall be non-Council members. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee should be an external individual, independent of Council, but elected by Council. Chairs of subcommittees and other groups do not need to be Council members unless otherwise stated.

Commented [LL2]: Just to clarify or it could be read that they should not be members of RCVS Council

13. Chairs of the standing committees will generally hold the office for a three-year period and will be re-elected by Council annually. They will be expected to align with the chair role specification.

14. Standing committees will select their own Vice-Chairs, unless otherwise specified. The Vice-Chairs can be any full member of the committee* (ie not an observer, but does not have to be a Council member) apart from the Vice-Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, who should be a full member and a Council member. They will be re-elected every year by members of the relevant committee, from among self-nominated candidates, as soon as possible into the new presidential year.
15. All the standing committees will generally meet between three and six times a year, either in-person or remotely. If there is no, or not enough, business to justify a meeting, the Chair can cancel a meeting. There may also be occasions when an additional meeting is required if decisions need to be made more quickly. Small amounts of business can also be conducted by email if there is not sufficient time to mount a meeting and full discussion is not required, but this should be the exception. The quorum for standing committees will generally be a simple majority of the total number of full voting members (ie not observers), unless otherwise specified (for example, VN Council, see below). For more detail about the operation of a meeting, see the role specification for an RCVS Committee Chair.
16. If an item crosses the remit of more than one committee, a joint meeting may be held. The Chair of the meeting will be one of the Chairs of the two committees coming together, to be agreed between them. If an item starts with one committee but, over time, becomes more relevant for another, it may be cross-referred to the most appropriate by the original Chair, or come back to Council for either a decision on the item itself, or a decision on the delegation route. The guidance of the President on the most appropriate course of action may be sought.
17. Where a joint meeting is held of two committees, each committee must be quorate in its own right. Where such joint meetings take place, the Chair of the meeting may be the Chair of either committee, or another member of either committee, at the discretion of the President. The Finance and Resources Committee and Audit and Risk Committee meet formally once per year to discuss the annual report and accounts with the auditors, and the chair shall alternate between the Treasurer and the Chair of ARC for this joint meeting.
18. The committees may appoint one or more subcommittees or working parties for such general or special purpose as they may think fit, subject to the approval of the Finance and Resources Committee and/or Council, and, subject to any contrary direction from the Council, may on behalf of the Council delegate to such subcommittees power to act in the name of the College and the Council in relation to the matters set out in their terms of reference.
19. The RCVS Officer Team may select one Observer for each of the non-statutory standing committees. If an Officer is on the Committee in another capacity, this additional Observer may not be required.

Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee

20. The Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee shall deal with appeals of the outcome of RCVS accreditations of veterinary degrees or VN educational programmes, following review by the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)/Education Committee/VN Education

Committee (VNEC), as appropriate. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the Registrar. One member should be appointed from the Council Officer team (for example, current President or Vice-President), one member from Council and one lay member (should be nominated from the list of RCVS accreditation panel members). The meeting will normally be held within two months of receipt of the request by the appellant institution for consideration of the appeal by an appeals panel.

Advancement of the Professions Committee

21. The Advancement of the Professions Committee will oversee work that is non-statutory in nature and contributes broadly to the advancement of the veterinary and/or veterinary nursing professions.
22. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, leadership, innovation, mental health (Mind Matters), the Fellowship, international strategy, Vet Futures, VN Futures, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and other workstreams to be defined by Council.
23. This will exclude work that is non-statutory but sufficiently covered by existing standing committees, such as postgraduate education.
24. The Committee shall comprise the chairs of relevant working parties or taskforces, or appropriate Council member champions, together with up to four other members of Council (chair, lay member, veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse), together with relevant members of the Senior Team. Other Committee members may be co-opted if necessary. RCVS Knowledge, an independent charity, will contribute by means of its Chair of Trustees, who will be an invited observer. Although they each have responsibility for individual projects or areas of work, Committee members will review and input across all areas, with collective responsibility.
25. The Committee shall:
 - a. Take regular reports from the leads on these areas of work and consider the ongoing effectiveness of the work against agreed strategy, timing and resourcing, making recommendations for changes, where appropriate. Consider any additional budgetary impact of these workstreams, which would then be escalated via the Financial Controls process;
 - b. Ensure that potential synergies between the various projects and initiatives reporting into the Committee are identified and exploited, and that opportunities for working collaboratively to maximise the impact of workstreams is explored;
 - c. Provide a forum for in-depth consideration of the issues surrounding or arising from the projects and initiatives that report into the Committee;
 - d. Provide a forum for blue-sky thinking to support the identification and development of new non-statutory projects that would serve to advance the professions;

- e. Flag up any issues of concern to the Audit and Risk Committee, via the Risk Register, particularly in terms of financial, reputational or legal risks associated with the project and initiatives reporting to the Committee;
- f. Make recommendations to Council for any new streams of work which may be appropriate under our Royal Charter; and,
- g. Make a report to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).

Audit and Risk Committee

Commented [LL3]: As noted in the cover paper, the ARC ToR to be updated and brought to Council in autumn

- 26. The Audit and Risk Committee shall support the Council by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls in meeting the Council's oversight responsibilities. The Committee is a non-executive committee and has no executive powers except as set out below.
- 27. The Committee has delegated authority to:
 - a. Monitor the Council's risk management arrangements;
 - b. Approve the internal audit programme; and,
 - c. Advise the Council on the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls, including internal and external audit arrangements, and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control.
- 28. The Committee may request the attendance of any employee or member, as set out in paragraph 42 below, and may incur expenditure for the purpose of obtaining advice in terms of paragraph 46 below.
- 29. The Committee is accountable to the Council. The minutes of each Committee meeting shall be circulated to the Council. The Committee shall report to the Council annually on its work. It may also submit separately to the Council its advice on issues where it considers that the Council should take action. Where the Committee considers there is evidence of *ultra vires* transactions or evidence of improper acts, the Chair of the Committee shall raise the matter at a formal Council meeting.
- 30. The Committee shall have five members, but may operate with fewer while a vacancy exists, provided the quorum is maintained. The members shall include two Council members, of whom one shall be a lay member and one a registrant member. Neither the President, Vice-Presidents, nor the Treasurer shall be members of the Committee. The members of the Committee who are not Council members (the "external members") shall have appropriate audit and risk management experience.

31. The Council will elect one of the external members serving on the Committee as Chair, based on relevant background and skills. The Committee will elect a Vice-Chair and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting.
32. The Committee shall support the Council by reviewing and advising the Council on the operation and effectiveness of the arrangements which are in place across the whole of the Council's activities that support the achievement of the Council's objectives. In particular, the Committee shall review the adequacy of:
 - a. All risk and control related disclosure statements, together with any accompanying internal audit statement, where appropriate, external audit opinion or other appropriate independent assurances, prior to endorsement by the Council;
 - b. The underlying assurance processes that indicate the degree of the achievement of corporate objectives, the effectiveness of the management of principal risks and the appropriateness of the above disclosure statements;
 - c. The policies for ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory, legal, governance and code of conduct requirements; and
 - d. The policies and procedures for all work related to fraud and corruption.
33. In carrying out this work the Committee will primarily utilise the work of internal audit, where appropriate, external audit and other assurance functions. It will also seek reports and assurances from Department Managers as appropriate, concentrating on the over-arching systems of governance, risk management and internal control together with indicators of their effectiveness.
34. In reviewing risk management arrangements, the Committee shall draw attention to areas where:
 - a. Risk is being appropriately managed and controls are adequate (no action needed);
 - b. Risk is inadequately controlled (action needed to improve control);
 - c. Risk is over-controlled (resource being wasted which could be diverted to another use); and,
 - d. There is a lack of evidence to support a conclusion (if this concerns areas which are material to the organisation's functions, more audit and/or assurance work will be required).
35. In relation to internal audit, where appropriate, the Committee shall:
 - a. Ensure that there is effective internal audit activity that complies with any applicable standards and provides appropriate independent assurance to the Council, Audit and Risk Committee, Secretary and Registrar;

- b. The internal audit activity will include reviews into RCVS internal processes, policies and procedures. These reviews will be based on identified high risk areas from the Corporate Risk Register and assurance map;
- c. Ensure that the College makes adequate resource available to internal audit activity, where required;
- d. Review the need for an internal audit strategy, operational plan and work programme;
- e. Consider the major findings of the internal audit/review work, where carried out, and management's response; and,
- f. Annually review the effectiveness of internal audit.

36. In relation to external audit, the Committee shall:

- a. Consider the appointment and performance of the external auditor, the audit fee and any questions of resignation or dismissal and make appropriate recommendations to the Council;
- b. Discuss and agree with the external auditor, before the audit commences, the nature and scope of the audit as set out in the external audit plan and their local evaluation of audit risks;
- c. Review the work and findings of the external auditor, consider the implications and management's responses to their work; and,
- d. Review all external audit reports, including agreement of the annual audit letter before submission to the Council and any work undertaken outside the annual audit plan, together with the appropriateness of management responses.

37. The Committee shall review the annual financial statements, focusing particularly on:

- a. Disclosures relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee;
- b. Changes in, and compliance with, accounting policies and practices;
- c. Unadjusted mis-statements in the financial statements;
- d. Major judgmental areas; and,
- e. Significant adjustments resulting from the audit.

38. The Committee shall ensure that the systems for financial reporting to the Council, including those of budgetary control, are subject to review as to completeness and accuracy of the information provided to the Council.

39. The Committee shall meet not less than three times a year. The external auditors may request a meeting if they consider that one is necessary.
40. Only Committee members shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee. The Treasurer, CEO, Secretary and/or Registrar, and Director of Operations shall normally attend meetings. Representatives from the external auditors shall attend meetings as required for relevant items. The President and other Council members may attend meetings at the invitation of, or with the agreement of, the Chair of the Committee.
41. The Committee may request any employee or member to attend a meeting to assist with its discussions on any particular matter or to provide any information it may reasonably require in order to fulfil its remit. All employees and members shall co-operate with any reasonable request made by the Committee.
42. The Committee may ask any or all non-members to withdraw for all or part of a meeting if it so decides. In such an instance, the Chair shall ensure that a proper record is made of the meeting.
43. The senior representatives of external audit shall have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Committee. At least once a year, the Committee shall provide an opportunity to meet privately with the external auditors. College staff will not be present during these confidential meetings.
44. The Committee may investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It may seek any information it requires from any employee and all employees shall co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
45. The Committee may obtain legal or other independent professional advice and secure the attendance of external advisers with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, within the budget approved by the Council. The CEO and/or Registrar shall ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Chair and Committee.

Remit relating to accreditation functions of the College

46. The Committee will receive assurances that the quality assurance work undertaken by the College in relation to the accreditation of veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions is operating in accordance with its published procedures. This process of assurance is also designed to contribute to compliance with the requirements for membership with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) that 'Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities'. This will be achieved by:
 - a. At the beginning of each calendar year, the Committee will be provided with a work plan, detailing the accreditation visitations that are scheduled for the forthcoming year;
 - b. Brief progress reports against this work plan will be provided as a standing item at each meeting of the Committee. These reports will also highlight any major concerns or issues that had arisen as a result of quality assurance activities conducted in the period covered by the report;

- c. An annual report will be produced at the end of each calendar year. This will be presented to the Committee together with the work plan for the next calendar year. The annual report would be expected to include:
 - o Confirmation that quality assurance activities have been completed in line with the work plan, or reasons for any variation;
 - o Actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of discussion by committees;
 - o Actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of feedback from stakeholders (visitors/universities); and,
 - o Trends and themes identified in information presented year on year.
- 47. Findings of the Committee arising from assurances received on the quality assurance activities of the College in relation to veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions shall also be circulated to the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC), Education Committee and the Veterinary Nurses Education Committee.
- 48. The Committee may choose to invite attendance from representatives of Education Committee and VN Education Committee for the purpose of receiving assurances on quality assurance activities undertaken by those Committees.
- 49. Where an appointed member of the Audit and Risk Committee is also involved with the education quality assurance activities of the RCVS, they shall not be permitted voting rights on any issues discussed however they may remain present at the meeting for points of clarification.

Charter Case Committee

- 50. The Charter Case Committee shall deal with matters referred to it by the Preliminary Investigation Committee or the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee and decide whether a warning (confidential or public) would be appropriate.

Disciplinary Committees

- 51. The Disciplinary Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The Veterinary Nurses Disciplinary Committee shall be constituted in accordance with the Veterinary Nurse Conduct and Disciplinary Rules 2014.

Education Committee

- 52. The Education Committee shall set the policy for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of veterinary surgeons and determine the requirements for those seeking registration, for the award of qualifications under the Charter, for continuing professional development, and for recognition as RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist.

53. Under normal circumstances Council members will form the majority on non-statutory committees, but on Education Committee (and the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)) a minimum of one third and a maximum of one half of members will be co-opted external members with education expertise, for example, Heads of the Veterinary Schools or other veterinary school staff members. Two students will also sit on the Education Committee (and two on PQSC). In addition, the Chairs of the Education Subcommittees and a member of the Officer Team will sit as non-voting observers.
54. The Committee shall develop and keep under review education and training requirements for registration, and in particular shall:
- a. Define Day-One Competences and advise on the content of the veterinary undergraduate curriculum;
 - b. Oversee the approval process and ongoing monitoring of veterinary degrees and international recognition agreements, considering subcommittee reports on appointment of accreditation panel members, accreditation event reports, follow-up reports and annual monitoring reports from veterinary schools, subcommittee reports on overseas degrees from other accrediting bodies or the College, and subcommittee reports on operation of the statutory membership examination; and,
 - c. Make recommendations to Council on any change in approved status concerning registrable degrees, on the regulations governing the statutory membership examination and on the regulations governing practice by students.
55. The Committee shall develop and keep under review policy for continuing professional development, revalidation of Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status, and postgraduate training and qualifications, and in particular shall:
- a. Define Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for, and monitor, the VetGDP;
 - b. Set the requirements for and monitor continuing professional development within the profession;
 - c. Develop and maintain a framework of College postgraduate awards, receiving reports from subcommittees on the standards for College-awarded certificates and fellowships by thesis, examinations and accreditation of other recognised postgraduate qualifications as part of the framework;
 - d. Define the requirements for RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist status, receiving reports from subcommittees on the maintenance of lists for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists; and,
 - e. Recommend to Council amendments to the certificate rules.

56. The Committee shall recommend fees to the Finance and Resources Committee for all related activities, for example, application and annual fees for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists, together with reviewer remuneration; fees for Statutory Membership exam candidates and remuneration for examiners; remuneration for accreditation panel members and reviewers of Advanced Practitioners and Specialist applications.

Examination Appeals Committee

57. The Examination Appeals Committee shall deal with appeals relating to the conduct of examinations administered by the College.

Finance and Resources Committee

58. The Finance and Resources Committee shall be responsible ensuring the finances, resources and framework of the College governance system is fit for purpose, thus enabling the Council and committees to deliver against the College's objects. It shall comprise the Treasurer (Chair), nominated representatives from Education, Standards, Advancement of the Professions, Preliminary Investigation Committee/Disciplinary Committee Liaison and Registration Committees and VN Council, together with two lay members of Council and two veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse members of Council (ie two in total). The CEO, Registrar, Director of People and Director of Operations will be non-voting members.
59. The representatives from the Committees will be selected by the Committee as soon as possible after RCVS Day and will hold the role for a three-year period or until they come off the Committee that they are representing, or off Council.
60. It shall make recommendations to Council as appropriate.
61. It will be chaired by the Treasurer, and its functions will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- [a.](#) Presenting an annual budget to Council for approval;
- [a.b.](#) ~~Review and recommending~~ proposed fee changes;
- [c.](#) Laying down procedures for budgeting and financial control;
- [b.d.](#) Conducting financial modelling of Management Accounts;
- [e.e.](#) Approving expenditure from the Discretionary Fund;
- [d.f.](#) Seeking the approval of Council for expenditure from the College's reserves;
- [e.g.](#) Managing the assets and investments of the College;

f.h. Working with the executive team to ensure management of organisational risks, maintenance of a risk register and delivery of appropriate internal audit reviews, with oversight provided by the Audit and Risk Committee;

i. Overseeing the appointment of professional advisers to the College, over £7550,000 (excluding Auditors);

Commented [LL4]: In line with updated Financial Controls

Commented [LL5]: This is the remit of Audit and Risk Committee

g.i. Having an overview of resource demands, and approval of any new initiatives meeting the threshold outlined in the financial controls;

h.k. Acting as Project Board for substantive projects, where applicable under the project protocol, unless another dedicated group exists;

i.l. Approving rates of travelling and subsistence expenses, and remuneration for work carried out on the College's behalf;

j.m. In consultation with the APC and the Fellowship Board, deciding fees for application and ongoing membership of the Fellowship;

k.n. Advising Council on corporate governance matters, including the terms of reference and composition of committees (but not individual membership);

l.o. Approving the setting up of subcommittees, working parties and other such bodies, and determining their composition (but not individual membership), by considering proposals made by sponsoring committees, Officers or senior staff members (Council to ratify members of long-term groups as part of the annual cycle, sponsoring committees to agree terms of reference);

m.p. Approving the disbanding of subcommittees, working parties and other such bodies, as appropriate;

n.q. Taking oversight on people resources within the organisation to ensure efficient delivery of activities, with a focus on role numbers, engagement, recruitment and retention; and,

o.r. Keeping under review the rules and arrangements for Council elections (the operation of the annual elections themselves being overseen by the Registrar, as returning officer).

Preliminary Investigation Committees

62. The Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee shall be constituted in accordance with the Veterinary Nurse Conduct and Disciplinary Rules 2014.

Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee

63. The Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee shall include the chair of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), the chair of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC), the chair of the Disciplinary Committee (DC), at least two members of Council one of whom is a member of the Officer Team, the chair of Standards Committee (SC). The member of the Officer Team to undertake the role of chair of the (liaison) committee for a three-year term, usually incoming Junior Vice-President in the year that the role becomes vacant.
64. The Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee shall serve as a channel for communication between the Preliminary Investigation, Charter Case and Disciplinary Committees and Council, discussing policy issues in connection with the supervision of professional conduct. These shall include the following:
- a. The setting and monitoring of key performance indicators and monitoring processes;
 - b. Working methods;
 - c. Monitoring costs and resources related to the committees;
 - d. Arrangements for the recruitment of members of the Committees, including deciding the membership of the independent selection panel and overseeing the process (final decision on successful candidates to be ratified by Council), appraisal of their performance and the process for selection for chairs;
 - e. Arrangements for the appointment of legal advisors (including legal assessors) in connection with the professional conduct function;
 - f. Planning for a public review of the implementation of the legislative reform order; and,
 - g. Facilitating a 'feedback loop' between DC and CCC decisions, outcomes of the PIC and RVN PIC, the SC and the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS).
65. The PIC/DC Liaison Committee shall also monitor the impact of the protocol for private prosecutions against unqualified individuals, which commenced on 1 April 2023.

Registration Appeals Committee

66. The Registration Appeals Committee shall deal with appeals against refusal of registration to the RCVS Register of Veterinary Surgeons or RCVS Register of Veterinary Nurses. This does not include appeals against the results of any examination administered by the College or of any assessment carried out by the College for the purpose of any qualification awarded by the College.

Registration Committee

67. The Committee shall comprise the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer of the College, together with two veterinary members of Council, a veterinary nurse member to be appointed by Veterinary Nurse Council (VNC), and a lay member of Council or VNC. The Committee shall be chaired by one of the Officers of the College, who will chair for a three-year term. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Registrar, and Director of Operations shall attend and participate in the meeting but shall be non-voting members.
68. The Committee shall be responsible for activities relating to the registration of veterinary and veterinary nurse members of the College (and, in due course, other Associate members of the College), and will provide and make recommendations to Council and/or VNC on matters relating to registration as appropriate.
69. Responsibilities will include but are not limited to:
- a. Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 related to the registration of veterinary surgeons; (in conjunction with the Education Committee as appropriate);
 - b. Reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules related to the registration of veterinary nurses; (in conjunction with VNC);
 - c. Reviewing and monitoring the policies and procedures relating to registration and publication of the Register;
 - d. Advising in relation to the creation of new categories of Associate members of the RCVS;
 - e. Keeping under review data relating to Find-A-Vet;
 - f. Monitoring registration activities (including trends in Registration for both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses);
 - g. Monitoring reports from relevant Appeal panels, ie
 - the Examination Appeals Committee;
 - h. Considering applications for Temporary Registration in accordance with the VSA 1966; and,
 - i. Reporting to Council on a regular basis summarising the work that comes under its purview (usually via the minutes of its meetings).

Specialist Recognition and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee

70. The Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee shall determine appeals relating to recognition of Specialists and Advanced Practitioners after reviewing the original papers considered by the first instance panel, subcommittee or committee.

Standards Committee

71. The Standards Committee shall provide advice and guidance on the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, including, but not limited to:
- a. Publishing a Code or Codes of Professional Conduct, subject to the approval of the Council;
 - b. Publishing as necessary advice on professional conduct;
 - c. Responding to professional conduct issues raised by the RCVS Council, Veterinary Nurses' Council or any committee of the RCVS;
 - d. Responding to requests for advice from members of the profession and the public, as agreed by the chair; and,
 - e. Overseeing the development of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme by the Practice Standards Group, making recommendations to Council as appropriate, and considering appeals from the Practice Standards Scheme Review Group.

Veterinary Nurses' Council

72. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall consist of the following members:
- a. Six veterinary nurses practising or living wholly or mainly in the United Kingdom, elected by ballot of all veterinary nurses, conducted substantially in accordance with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election Scheme 1967 (as amended), with the necessary adaptations;
 - b. Two veterinary nurses to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council;
 - c. Two veterinary surgeons, to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council in consultation with RCVS Council;
 - d. Four lay members to be appointed by the Veterinary Nurses' Council.
73. The term of office of elected and appointed members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be three years in each case, and one-third of the elected members shall retire in rotation each year, being eligible for re-election if still qualified to serve. A member elected or appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall serve the unexpired portion of the predecessor's term of office.
74. Members of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall serve a maximum of three successive terms and after which they will be eligible to re-stand for election or be re-appointed after a gap of two years.
75. The quorum for meetings of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be seven members, which must include four veterinary nurse members, one veterinary surgeon member and one lay member.

76. The Chair and up to two Vice-Chairs of the Veterinary Nurses' Council shall be elected by the Veterinary Nurses' Council, by secret ballot. The Chair will be either an elected or appointed veterinary nurse. The election of the Chair shall be confirmed by the RCVS Council.
77. The term of office of the Chair shall usually be three years and Vice-Chair(s) shall serve for either one or three years, with the outgoing Chair normally serving one year as Vice-Chair.
78. The Veterinary Nurses Council was established in 2002 and the Supplementary Royal Charter confirms its functions shall encompass the regulation of the profession of veterinary nurses.
79. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall, in addition to those functions specified in the Supplemental Royal Charter:
- a. Set standards for the training and education of persons wishing to be entered into the Register;
 - b. Set requirements in relation to the registration of veterinary nurses;
 - c. Set standards for the conduct of veterinary nurses;
 - d. Maintain the register of veterinary nurses;
 - e. Recommend to the Finance and Resources Committee a budget and levels of fees to be charged; and,
 - f. Recommend to the Council amendments to the rules relating to the registration, conduct and discipline of veterinary nurses.
80. In exercising its functions, the Veterinary Nurses' Council may delegate responsibility for matters related to veterinary nurse education, both licence to practise and post registration awards, to the Veterinary Nurse Education Committee.
81. The Veterinary Nurses' Council shall ensure that the welfare of animals and good veterinary practice are central to its work.

Other groups with delegated responsibilities

82. In addition to the abovementioned Committees, the following groups of individuals are tasked with oversight and/or delivery of specific areas of activity.

Chairs of standing committees

83. In addition to leading the work of their respective committees, the chairs of the standing committees (excluding the independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the chair of the PIC/DC Liaison Committee, which is a co-ordinating role) will usually meet with the Officer Team and senior staff members prior to each Council meeting to discuss the running order and

Commented [LL6]: To take account of the fact that if there are no relevant papers for that Chair, they are not required at the meeting.

presentation of papers. They will also provide advance notice of major decisions likely to be put before Council at future meetings, in order to enable the flow and time management of those meetings.

Officer Team

84. The Officer Team comprises the President, Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President and Treasurer, who are elected by the Council according to the election rules.
85. The Officer Team will meet on a regular basis with senior staff in order to discuss relevant matters, with a focus on external meetings, media management, communications and stakeholder relationships. The Chair of the Veterinary Nurses' Council will be invited to attend meetings of the Officer Team.
86. The Officer Team will also act as the **Nominations Subcommittee**, together with the Chair of VN Council, CEO and Registrar, and one veterinary and one veterinary nurse member of Council, proposing who will be awarded College honours and awards (choices will be ratified by Council and, for the VN Golden Jubilee Award, VN Council).
87. The Officer Team will also act as the **Remuneration Subcommittee**. The Remuneration Subcommittee meets annually to decide a policy on how the budget allocated to staff salaries, as agreed by Council as part of the budget-setting process, should be allocated, for example, what percentage should be allocated to salary increases and what to bonuses. It does not look at individual staff salaries, which is the role of the Senior Team, apart from the remuneration of the CEO, which is considered by the President in line with the aforementioned policy. The Subcommittee consists of the Officer Team, with the following staff members attending in a non-voting capacity: Directors of People and Operations, Registrar and CEO.

Commented [LL7]: A separate paper before Council in June will seek agreement on changes here - any agreed changes will be included in the final version of the Delegation scheme that is published.

Senior Team

88. The purpose of the Senior Team is to enable Council to set the strategic direction and oversee governance of the RCVS, and to enable the College staff team to deliver.
89. The Senior Team comprises the RCVS Departmental Directors and is led by the CEO, who takes responsibility for delivery of the RCVS strategic plan, as agreed by Council, and the day-to-day running of the College.
90. The Senior Team meets regularly and a summary of points raised is communicated to departmental teams. The CEO chairs these meetings, and the Executive Director of RCVS Knowledge is invited to sit as observer.
91. The key responsibilities of the Senior Team are as follows:
- a. Support and advise the Officers (President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer), Council and committee members in the development and delivery of the Strategic Plan;

- b. Ensure delivery of the Strategic Plan and keep Council regularly updated on progress against time, budget and intended impact;
- c. Enable understanding of the RCVS purpose and Strategic Plan throughout the organisation and to ensure continual, coherent and consistent communication;
- d. Create an environment in which our people can deliver, learn and thrive;
- e. Ensure the effective and efficient day-to-day direction and management of the organisation in line with key functions as a Royal College and regulator;
- f. Propose and manage the College budget ensuring the most effective use of resources;
- g. Recommend Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and service standards, and review activities against these, making adjustments to procedures and resources as applicable in association with the relevant Committee Chairs;
- h. Utilise the collective wisdom and expertise of the Senior Team and wider organisation by collaborating to exploit synergies and advance our organisational priorities;
- i. Ensure appropriate mitigations against risk, keeping the organisational and departmental Risk Registers up to date and report regularly to the Audit and Risk Committee;
- j. Horizon-scan for opportunities and threats, building networks to understand, for example, research and best practice from other similar organisations both at home and overseas, and act on this information appropriately; and,
- k. Identify and consider issues and activities for communication to the wider organisation, professions and public.

[Approved by Council 6 June 2024]

Commented [LL8]: New approved version to be re-dated

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	Veterinary Surgeon Act 1966 offences update – illegal practice, and misuse of title, etc.
Summary	This paper offers a summary / update regarding private prosecutions, and alternative resolutions.
Decision required	To note
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct /Assistant Registrar g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7227 3504</p> <p>Michael Hepper Barrister/Chief Investigator m.hepper@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0755</p>

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulations

Veterinary Surgeon Act 1966 offences update

Introduction

1. Council will recall that in the RCVS' Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2024, an item to be reviewed was to discuss / consider what role the RCVS could undertake where acts of veterinary surgery are carried out by unregistered / unqualified persons, and whether the RCVS should consider, in any circumstances, carrying out private prosecutions for offences under section 19 and / or 20 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (VSA).
2. At its meeting in March 2023, Council implemented the 12-month trial period of the draft Protocol for the investigation of illegal practice. Council will recall that the Protocol provides guidance on when the RCVS may consider investigating a report of illegal practice, and if necessary, when it may consider bringing a private prosecution for alleged breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (the ACT).
3. At its June 2024 meeting, upon conclusion of the 12-month trial period, Council confirmed that the private prosecution protocol should continue and reported on an annual basis for Council to get an understanding of the cases that have been considered, and the subsequent outcomes.
4. At its same meeting (June 2024) Council also decided that the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee (PIC/DC) Liaison Committee continue to monitor the protocol for private prosecution, and that the Professional Conduct Department / Registrar should have the ability to take private prosecution cases forward based on the advice the College received from its external solicitors.
5. This report outlines the illegal practice activities during the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.
6. There have been no private prosecutions commenced or undertaken during this 12-month period.

The table below shows numbers of illegal practice reports registered monthly during the period (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025).

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
1	7	3	6	0	0	5	0	0	3	5	6

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data

Alleged illegal practice reports received

7. During the period, 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, the total number of email reports / allegations received into the illegal practice inbox is 36. Of the 36 reports assessed:
 - 28 reports were closed. Of these:
 - 17 reports were closed following initial assessment and investigation because the information provided was not direct evidence nor did it identify any offender. As these reports did not meet the 'realistic prospect of conviction' threshold, RCVS advice letters

setting out section 19 of the ACT were sent to business owner (if identified) regarding the treatment of animals by unqualified persons.

- 3 reports were identified potential breaches of the Veterinary Medicine Regulations (VMRs) because they related to website advertisements of medicines (CBD oils) and a person allegedly supplying antibiotics for her neighbour's cat - With the consent of the complainants, these reports were transferred to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) Enforcement. The VMD is investigating these allegations.
- 2 reports were closed following investigation regarding unregistered veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse use of title on social media and email communications. One case involved a veterinary surgeon academic who had not realised their registration had lapsed and was using MRCVS on their email communication. This matter was immediately resolved with the veterinary surgeon completing their registration. The other case involved an unqualified person stating on their Facebook platform that they are a veterinary nurse. As veterinary nurse is not a protected title under the ACT, the RCVS Chief Investigator telephoned the person and advised that their use of the title veterinary nurse may be considered as misleading the public and therefore fraudulent. The person was unaware of this and removed any reference to being veterinary nurse off their Facebook platform.
- 1 report was closed following a police investigation regarding the supply of fraudulent vaccination cards allegedly signed by an unregistered person claiming to be a veterinary surgeon. The police are reporting one person to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for consideration of a prosecution.
- 1 report was transferred to the RCVS concerns process because it related to the professional conduct of properly registered veterinary surgeon and did not involve illegal practice.
- 1 report received from another agency for assistance was closed with the RCVS providing a witness statement. Subsequently, the business premises were visited by a trading standards officer and police officer. During the site visit the owner was informally warned by the police regarding the treatment of animals by unqualified persons. Trading Standards and police are monitoring the business for compliance.
- 3 reports were closed following assessment and investigation because there was no evidence of illegal practice or the person reporting the alleged illegal practice was unable to identify the alleged offender, and there was insufficient information despite our efforts to enable us to identify any offence or offender.

The table below shows the descriptions of illegal practice allegations received / registered during the period of the private prosecution protocol (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025).

Description of alleged illegal practice	Number of Cases
Procedures advertised on fertility clinic / breeder websites and social media	18
Other services advertised on websites and social media e.g., dental and grooming businesses	4
Misuse of title	2
Unregistered veterinary surgeons / nurses	2
Prescribing/Possess medicines	7
Conduct of veterinary surgeon	1
RCVS assistance requested from other agencies	2

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data

8. There are eight ongoing cases, including those that are the subject of ongoing liaison with or referral to other agencies. Of the eight ongoing cases:
 - 2 cases are active investigations involving other agencies, police and local authority.
 - 4 cases have been referred to the VMD. Of these 4 cases:
 - One business/person, initially, is to be sent a VMD warning letter.
 - Three are being considered for unannounced site visits.
 - 2 cases are ongoing RCVS investigations.
 - The RCVS has requested further information (direct evidence) from persons who allege illegal practice, and/or also information from the alleged offender. Generally, if further information / evidence is required for the RCVS to properly assess the alleged illegal practice, a written request is sent to the complainant. If no reply is received within a calendar month, a reminder email request is sent giving a fourteen-day response date. If no response is received and the RCVS primary assessment / investigation does not identify any illegal practice, the case file is closed.
9. As mentioned above, there have been no private prosecutions commenced or undertaken during the trial period. Consequently, except for staff time / costs, no other costs were incurred during the 12-month period between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.
10. The number of reports of illegal practice have reduced from sixty-five reports during the trial period (1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024).to thirty-six reports during this reporting period (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025). During 2023 there were a number of online publications highlighting the increase in the number of unregulated dog breeders and canine fertility clinics. This information coincided with the launch of the RCVS private prosecution protocol and as such, a number of illegal practice reports regarding these types of businesses were received. We can only assume

that the number of illegal practice reports has reduced for the period 2024/2025 simply because there was a surge of this type of illegal practice report when the initiative was first publicised.

Category of persons reporting alleged illegal practice

11. The total number of email reports / allegations received by category of person into the Illegal practice inbox is:

- Members of Public is 21
- Veterinary Profession is 10
- Other agencies or similar is 5

Summary

12. The trial period showed that approximately 39 of all email reports received related to activities published or advertised on canine fertility clinic / breeder websites and social media. In contrast there have been 18 email reports received during the current reporting period about the activities published on canine fertility clinic websites and social media.

13. During the current reporting period, the reports regarding unregulated canine fertility clinics continue to remain focused on two types of procedure:

- canine artificial insemination; and
- canine progesterone testing.

14. Regarding this type of alleged illegal practice, the RCVS received no direct or conclusive evidence during the trial period (what the complainant personally saw and / or heard). The information provided in the majority of all reports received consisted of downloaded or screenshot images or information regarding canine fertility services advertised on social media and / or websites.

15. As Council is aware, the use of website images and/or social media information in criminal proceedings depends on authenticity and admissibility. Therefore, in order to use such evidence, the RCVS would be required to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the account holder created the post or made the image(s) or made the video recording and was / is involved in illegal practice. Consequently, website and social media images/advertisements require to be supported by other sources of evidence e.g. direct eyewitness evidence of the offence. Therefore, this type of website / social media information, in itself, is not sufficient to satisfy the realistic prospect for a conviction threshold but where appropriate, the information is shared with other agencies.

16. Many activities reported to the illegal practice email inbox are resolved through sending advice / warning and cease & desist letters to a named person(s) or business. This is because there is no direct evidence (evidence that was observed, directly, by the complainant presenting it) of illegal practice to satisfy the 'realistic prospect of conviction' threshold, and it is considered proportionate, therefore, to address the issues by this means.

17. For evidential purposes these types of letters are sent by Recorded Delivery and are a matter of record at the College. To date, there have been no reports received of repeat alleged offending, and follow-up investigation of the websites / social media confirmed compliance in regard to canine artificial insemination – information had been amended or had been removed. Consequently, these types of reports and the reduced number of reports received related to canine fertility clinics may be considered as a successful outcome.
18. When appropriate the RCVS shares information with other agencies to consider and if requested, is assisting in their investigations. Currently, the RCVS is assisting other agencies in three ongoing investigations.
19. In comparison to the trial period (1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024), the overall numbers of illegal practice reports during this period (1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025) have significantly reduced from 65 reports to 36 reports.
20. As no cases suitable or appropriate for prosecution have come to light, other than staff time, there have been no additional costs involved managing the private prosecution protocol for the 2024/2025 reporting period.
21. Council is asked to note the information provided above and consider whether it wishes to make any changes to the protocol, or whether any further information is required. This report has been placed before PIC/DC Liaison Committee.

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications

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Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council June 2025

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since the last report, and covers the period 2 March to 21 May 2025.
2. Since the last Report to Council there have been six Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (5 March, 19 March, 2 April, 16 April, 7 May and 21 May).

New cases considered by the S2PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the S2PIC at the six meetings referred to above is 13. Of the 13 new cases considered:
 - Three were concluded at first consideration by the Committee.
 - Ten were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Performance or Health Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

5. The S2PIC is currently investigating 28 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example).

Health Protocol

6. There are no veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Protocol

7. There is one veterinary surgeon currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service.
9. In the period 2 March 2025 to 21 May:
 - the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 691; and,
 - the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 152.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 2 March 2025 and 21 May 2025. At the last Council meeting the categories in use were discussed. It was noted that “veterinary care” is the most commonly used, and a question was raised as to whether this could be broken down into more specific sub-categories (all the categories relating to chapters of the Supporting Guidance to the Code of Conduct). This change has been implemented, and the data will be available to Council in the next report.

Concerns registered between 2 March and 21 May 2025

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	1
- Certification	0
- Client confidentiality	1
- Clinical and client records	5
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	10
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Conviction	13
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	3
- Euthanasia of animals	3
- Euthanasia of animals – ‘Tuk’s law’	0
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	1
- Illegal practice	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	0
- Named veterinary surgeons	1
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	1
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	1
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	1
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	2
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care	90
- Veterinary medicines	3

- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – ‘under care’ query, other	0
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- Whistle-blowing	4
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	7
- Unassigned	5
Total	152

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 2 March 2025 to 21 May 2025, the Committee has referred one case involving one veterinary surgeon to the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

Referral to Charter Case Committee

12. In the period 2 March 2025 to 21 May 2025, one case has been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

Veterinary Investigators

13. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have undertaken one announced visit to a Veterinary Surgeon to check compliance with minimum practice standards, clinical records, veterinary medicines and CPD at the request of the PIC. The Chief Investigator has undertaken one unannounced visit to a disciplinary witness to serve documents.

Concerns procedure

14. As Council is aware, the process for the consideration of concerns at Stage one changed at the beginning of October 2022. The median number of weeks in which cases concluded at Stage one can be seen below.

Month in which case concluded	Median number of weeks taken
February 2023	13
March 2023	13.3
April 2023	14.9
May 2023	14.3
June 2023	14.4
July 2023	15
August 2023	15.9
September 2023	13.4
October 2023	12.6
November 2023	18.3
December 2023	11.5
January 2024	16
February 2024	15
March 2024	17.6
April 2024	15

May 2024	12.9
June 2024	19.9
July 2024	11.9
August 2024	15.2
September 2024	13.9
October 2024	12
November 2024	14.4
December 2024	15.9
January 2025	17.4
February 2025	13.4
March 2025	14.3
April 2025	10.1

15. PIC/DC Liaison Committee considered detailed information on the time taken by cases at Stage one at its meeting in November and discussed a new KPI timeframe in light of the data provided and the steps involved in the process. The Liaison Committee concluded that six months was an appropriate timeframe. It also concluded that it would still be helpful to provide median times taken, as this is a good indicator of the most likely duration of matters for those involved in the process.
16. In line with the above KPI, cases that commenced in September and October 2023 have been assessed retrospectively to determine what percentage of them met the six-month KPI. These can be seen below, and we continue to report on this percentage in the future.

17.

Month case started	Cases that met KPI
October 2023	94%
November 2023	87%
December 2023	84%
January 2024	86%
February 2024	93%
March 2024	87%
April 2024	90%
May 2024	85%
June 2024	75%
July 2024	97%
August 2024	91%
September 2024	91%
October 2024	91%

18. The Stage 2 KPI is currently for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained. At its meeting in May 2024, PIC/DC Liaison Committee, having undertaken a full review of the Stage 2 KPI, concluded that it was not appropriate to have a KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to that Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.

19. In the period 2 March 2025 to 21 May 2025, the PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the Charter Case Committee, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in three out of four simple cases.
20. Four complex cases were decided. In accordance with the above, these cases (and the work of the department in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

Illegal practice

21. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 1 March 2025), ten new reports of suspected illegal practice have been received, and which are subject to ongoing enquiries. There is a total of 12 ongoing enquiries. These are reported in greater detail to PIC/DC Liaison Committee and a separate paper on the protocol as a whole is before Council at this meeting.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	5 June 2025
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	<p>Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730</p> <p>Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there have been two meetings of the Stage 2 VN PIC, which took place on 11 March and 15 April. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 27 May 2025.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 1 March 2025 and 20 May 2025, there were 13 new Concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 13 new Concerns:
 - 1 case closed at Stage 1 VNPIC.
 - 10 cases are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 VNPIC).
 - 2 cases have been referred to Stage 2 VNPIC.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. No new cases have been considered by the Stage 2 VNPIC between 1 March 2025 and 20 May 2025. Six ongoing cases (involving five Respondents) were referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Three concerns are currently under investigation by the Stage 2 VN PIC, and these will be returned to the Committee for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, six cases (involving five Respondents) have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

8. Since the last report, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

9. Since the last report, two disciplinary hearings have taken place in relation to veterinary nurses. The first hearing took place on 26th and 27th February 2025 and related to the Respondent's conviction for fraud by abuse of position. The Disciplinary Committee found that the conviction,

set out in the charge, rendered the Respondent unfit to practise and directed the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register.

10. The second hearing took place between 10th and 12th March 2025 and related to the veterinary nurse's conviction for stealing controlled drugs from a practice where they were employed. A further four charges related to incidents in which the Respondent dishonestly took veterinary medicines from her place of work. The Disciplinary Committee concluded that for each of the individual charges, the Respondent's conduct fell far short of the conduct expected of a member of the profession and that each of the charges one to four amounted to serious professional misconduct. In relation to charge five, the criminal conviction, the Committee concluded that it rendered the veterinary nurse unfit to practise. The Committee concluded that the sanction of removal was the only proportionate sanction it could impose and therefore directed the Registrar to remove the Respondent's name from the Register.



Fonts - Swiss, Montserrat, Open Sans, Adobe Caslon

Different font families being used for print, web and social, plus an entirely different set used for ceremonial functions. Demonstrates an ad hoc approach to adoption as needs arose.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
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Adobe Caslon Pro Regular
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Adobe Caslon Pro Semibold
Adobe Caslon Pro Semibold Italic
Adobe Caslon Pro Bold
Adobe Caslon Pro Bold Italic

Colours

Far too many, with many never being used at all.

Primary

PMS 7468
Hex: #007298

R: 0
G: 114
B: 152

C: 100 %
M: 25 %
Y: 0 %
K: 40 %

PM 4515
Hex: #85A369

R: 181
G: 163
B: 105

C: 0 %
M: 10 %
Y: 42 %
K: 29 %

Secondary

PMS 2925 C
Hex: #009BDE

R: 0
G: 155
B: 222

C: 100 %
M: 30 %
Y: 0 %
K: 13 %

PMS 227 C
Hex: #AF0060

R: 175
G: 0
B: 96

C: 0 %
M: 100 %
Y: 45 %
K: 31 %

PMS 485 C
Hex: #E1251D

R: 225
G: 37
B: 29

C: 0 %
M: 84 %
Y: 87 %
K: 12 %

PMS 138 C
Hex: #E17D00

R: 225
G: 125
B: 0

C: 0 %
M: 44 %
Y: 100 %
K: 12 %

PMS 191 C
Hex: #F5436E

R: 245
G: 67
B: 110

C: 0 %
M: 73 %
Y: 55 %
K: 4 %

PMS 7699 C
Hex: #33647F

R: 51
G: 100
B: 127

C: 60 %
M: 21 %
Y: 0 %
K: 50 %

PMS 564 C
Hex: #82C8BE

R: 130
G: 200
B: 190

C: 35 %
M: 0 %
Y: 5 %
K: 22 %

PMS 533 C
Hex: #202A45

R: 32
G: 42
B: 69

C: 54 %
M: 39 %
Y: 0 %
K: 73 %

PMS 170 C
Hex: #FF8873

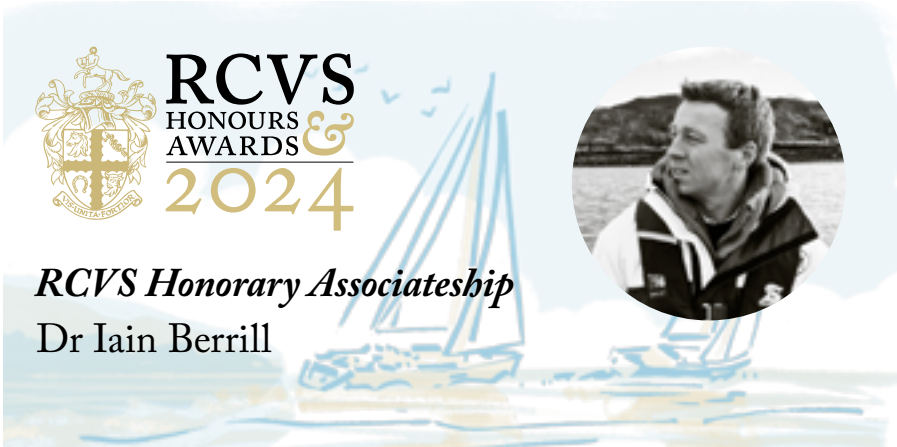
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M: 47 %
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PMS 2706 C
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C: 14 %
M: 11 %
Y: 0 %
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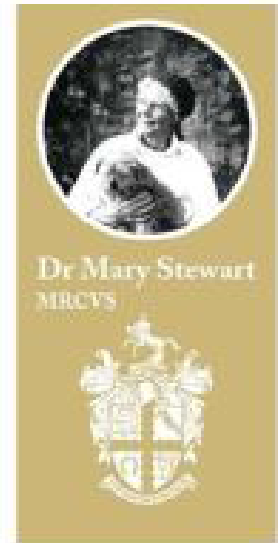
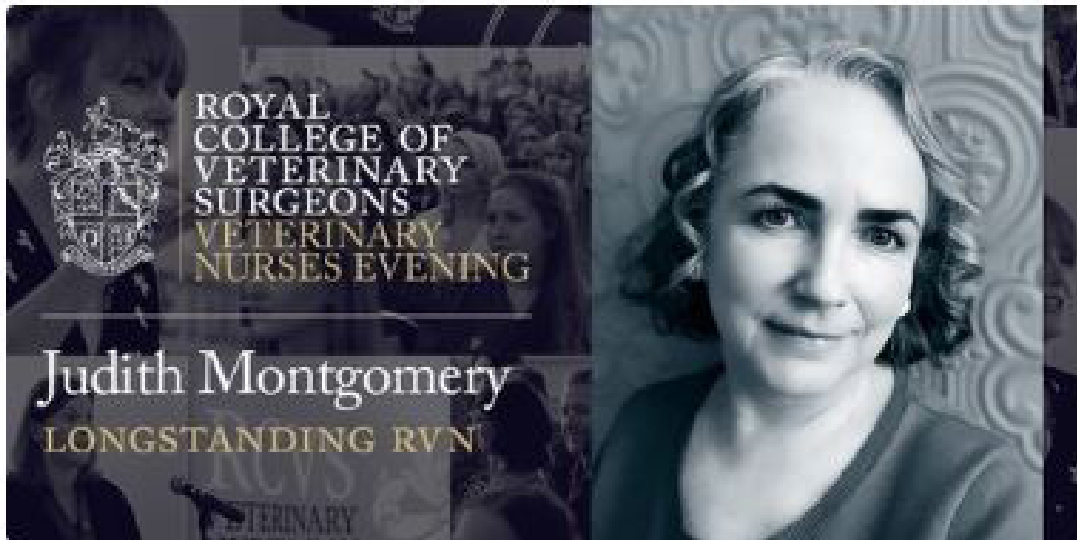
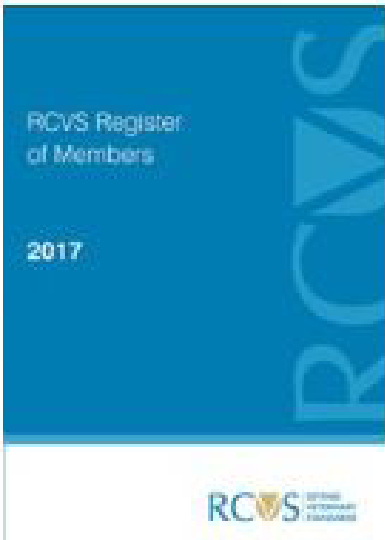
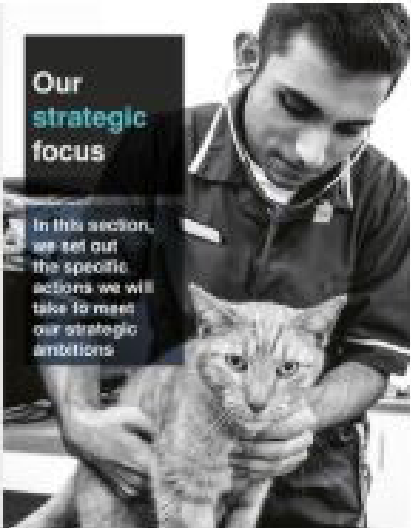
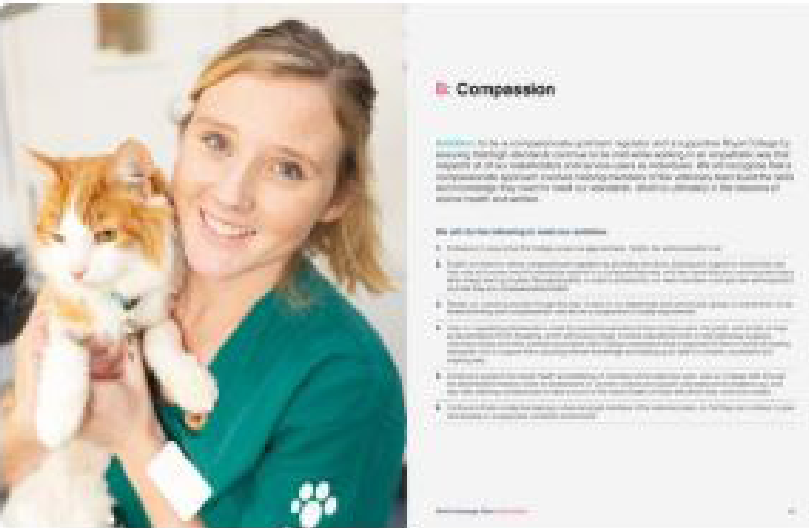
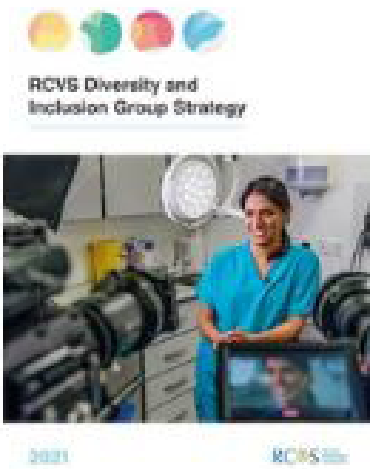
Ceremonial style.

The stark and corporate style used by the existing branding was not appropriate for events such as RCVS Day, VN Day, Stat exams, or the surrounding collateral such as certificates or trophies.



Example visuals

2024-01-31



Example visuals - sub brands





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RVN starting out

DURATION: 5h
COURSE STRUCTURE: 4 modules
TARGET AUDIENCE: Veterinary nurses

This course will support your development of the professional skills and behaviours during the transition from student to Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN). You will develop your capabilities, supporting you to become a competent, confident and independent member of your team and build a thriving career as an RVN.

You can complete this course independently or with a mentor. A mentor is an experienced and trusted colleague who can offer you guidance, advice and feedback as you work through the modules.

MODULES

1. Getting started

3. Working in a team

2. Gaining confidence

4. Developing your career



LEARNING OUTCOMES

By completing this course, you will be able to:

- Recognise the regulations and value of being a regulated veterinary nurse
- Develop your professional identity and build your confidence
- Apply effective communication techniques with clients and colleagues
- Define the value and impact of reflective teamwork
- Recognise the value of a growth mindset and lifelong workplace learning
- Apply reflective practice and identify opportunities to develop your career

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Mental Health
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