

Council

Hybrid meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 November 2022 at 10:00 am at Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, 12 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP

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. Minutes of meeting held 8 September 2022	Unclassified	n/a
5. Matters arising		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
6. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)		
a. Discretionary Fund	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
7. Reports of standing committees – to note		
a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Unclassified	n/a
b. Audit and Risk Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

c. Education Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1
d. Finance and Resources Committee		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
e. Registration Committee		
i. Meeting held 12 May 2021 - Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 12 May 2021 - Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
iii. Meeting held 15 June 2022 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
f. Joint Education Committee and Registration Committee	Confidential	1, 2, 3
g. Standards Committee		
i. Meeting held 9 May 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Meeting held 9 May 2022 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
iii. Meeting held 19 May 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. Meeting held 19 May 2022 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
v. Meeting held 16 June 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
vi. Meeting held 16 June 2022 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
vii. Meeting held 4 August 2022 – Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
viii. Meeting held 4 August 2022 – Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3
h. Veterinary Nurses Council		
i. Unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
i. PIC/DC Liaison Committee	Unclassified	n/a
8. 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	Unclassified	n/a
9. Notices of motion	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

10. Questions	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. Any other College business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. Date of next meeting Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 10:30 am at Nottingham University Veterinary School	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)		
a. Budget 2023	Confidential	1, 2, 3
15. Any other College business (confidential items)		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
16. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
17. Reflective Session	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	10 November 2022
Title	8 September 2022 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 September 2022
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes.
Attachments	None.
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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RCVS Knowledge Annual General Meeting and RCVS Council Meeting

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held at the School of Biodiversity, One Health and Veterinary Medicine (BOHVM), College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow, Garscube Campus, Bearsden Road, Glasgow G61 1QH on Thursday, 8 September 2022 at 10:30 am

Members:

Dr M A Donald (President in the Chair)	
Dr L H Allum	Professor S A May
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Miss L Belton	Professor T D H Parkin
Professor D Bray	Dr S Paterson
Dr A L Calow	Professor C J Proudman
Mr J M Castle	Mr M E Rendle
Dr D S Chambers	Dr K A Richards
Dr N T Connell	Mr T J Walker
Mrs O D R Cook	Mr W A S Wilkinson
Dr J M Dyer	Professor J L N Wood
Ms L Ford	Ms J S M Worthington
Dr M M S Gardiner	

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Ms A K Boag	Chair, RCVS Knowledge Board
Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Mr C Gush	Executive Director, RCVS Knowledge
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Ms J Shardlow	Chair, Audit and Risk Committee

RCVS Trustees joining remotely:

Miss E A Branscombe	RVN
Dr L A Brown	FRCVS
Dr I G C Dick	MRCVS
Miss L V Goodwin	MRCVS
Mr M Knight	
Dr T S Mair	FRCVS
Mr B Pound	

Guests:

Mr A Guthrie	<i>Vetsurgeon.org</i>
Mr P Imrie	<i>Veterinary Times</i>

Mr J Loeb
Ms G Mann
Mr J Westgate

Veterinary Record
Extra-mural Studies Student with *Veterinary Record*
Veterinary Times

RCVS Knowledge

Annual General Meeting

1. RCVS Knowledge Trustees had received their papers in August 2022; the minutes would be recorded separately to the RCVS Council minutes herewith.

Council Meeting

President's introduction and welcome to new member

2. The President welcomed guests and outlined the order of the meeting.
3. Dr Calow and Mrs Cook were welcomed to their first Council meeting.

Apologies for absence

4. Apologies for absence had been received from Dr C H Middlemiss, Chief Veterinary Officer (UK) and RCVS Council Observer.

Declarations of interest

5. There were no declarations of interest to report.

Minutes of previous Council meetings

6. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the 9 June, 6 July, and 8 July (Annual General Meeting) Council meetings. There were no further comments.

7. A vote was taken:

For:	22
Against:	0
Abstain:	2

8. Dr Richards experienced technical difficulties and submitted an email vote that was included in the figures.
9. The sets of unclassified minutes and classified appendix were accepted as true records of the meetings by a majority vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

10. There had been no written obituaries received. Council stood for a minute silence for colleagues and all members of the professions who had passed since it last met.

Council correspondence

Mind Matters support of Vetlife

11. It was reported that the College had received a letter from the President of Vetlife, Dr Dick, expressing gratitude to the College and Mind Matters Initiative team on behalf of Vetlife and the veterinary community for the £100,000 support funding recently received.

Commonwealth Games

12. The President had written a statement congratulating members of the profession at the recent Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham:
 - athlete Dr Laura Muir MRCVS – won gold for Team Scotland in the women’s 1500m and bronze at the women’s 800m finals;
 - cyclist Dr Neah Evans MRCVS – won silver for Team Scotland in the 25km cycling point race final, silver in the women’s road race, and bronze in the women’s 3000km individual pursuit final.
13. Also, congratulations were given to Mr Robert Pope MRCVS who had run across Ireland in one day, a distance of 134 miles, allegedly on a single pint of Guinness.

Committee membership 2022-2023

14. The Contacts and Calendar Booklet for the College year was to arrive and be distributed shortly.

November 2022 Council sessions

15. Council was reminded that an extra session of Council was planned for the afternoon of Wednesday, 9 November 2022, to discuss legislation changes, to be held in person in closed session. The venue was to be confirmed although it was to be in London and further details would be sent out as soon as possible.
16. Thereafter the regular scheduled full-day meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 November 2022. had been amended to being held in person rather than remote as originally agreed, as it was felt that it was important for people to be able to discuss the outcomes of the Under Care consultation face-to-face.

17. It was hoped to hold both meetings at the same venue, but this would be confirmed.

Fellowship Day 2022

18. This had been moved to Friday, 11 November 2022, to be held at the Royal Institution in London.

CEO update

19. The CEO reminded Council of its Culture Project and the requirement to get Council spend more time with members of the professions and the public – the meeting at School of Biodiversity, One Health and Veterinary Medicine (BOHVM) was the part of the first ‘foray’. There had been a Regional Question Time (RQT) held the evening before that had approximately 70 attendees from the local area generating a lively discussion; and a further breakfast meeting with staff and students of BOHVM prior to the Council meeting.

20. The paper before Council was outlined and the following items highlighted:

- the RCVS Academy had been launched in June; it was part of the compassion strand of the Strategic Plan to support the professions to meet its standards – it was not about clinical continuing professional development (CPD) but rather about meeting the standards set e.g. CPD, delegation, parts of the Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC), and providing positive feedback;
- the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) General Assembly had taken place in June, involving European colleagues;
- the Under Care consultation had another week to run;
- RCVS Day had taken place early in July;
- two Veterinary Nursing (VN) Days had taken place with speeches from the Chair of Veterinary Nurses Council, Director of VN, and Mrs Jeffery; there had also been the delayed Diamond Jubilee celebration of the VN profession.

21. It was noted that there was a lot of work ongoing, and the College was mid-way through its current Strategic Plan; most things had been started but were yet to finish, as well as ‘business as usual’. Over the next presidential year some items would come to an end, and others might affect staffing resources, and that would be reflected in the budget.

22. It had been commented that the table had been difficult to read as it contained such a lot of information, so Council was asked for suggestions for improvements and to indicate what it wished to see by email to the CEO.

23. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- could there be some clarification around the Clarity stream, ambition number 4: next step: pick up work with OIE?

- this related to a twinning programme that the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH – formerly OIE) had whereby established regulators worked alongside those just at the start of their development, so that both parties could learn from each other. For example, the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) had had a successful project with Thailand. The RCVS had been at the point of getting into a planning process for a similar project when Covid had hit. This would now be picked up again;
- at the Regional Question Time (RQT) held the previous evening it had been interesting to hear the challenges faced by students facing extra-mural studies (EMS); and the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Student Report 2022 was welcomed;
- the CEO Report was very thorough and the progress against the Strategic Plan was noted, but it was an explanation of the previous period, not about what was to happen next. Regarding A8, it should be noted that there were wider problems with appeals than just with Mutual Recognition of Primary Qualifications (MRPQ);
 - the Strategic Plan identified the need to review all appeal processes, not all of which had been completed yet;
- was it possible to colour code/RAG (red/amber/green) the report, or put a timeline on how far along the College was in that workstream?
 - noted. However, some items would never be finished as it was evolving work e.g. the Council Culture Project;
- with the cost-of-living crisis, students were struggling to afford to do EMS, which was one of the barriers to diversity and inclusion. The financial crisis might massively influence the type of debt students took on and the kind of course they studied at university, dependent on the financial situation of them and their families – the College should be mindful of that going forward;
- the report was really helpful, looking forward were there any issues that might arise that might, or might not be, tricky within six months to one year?
- there was a perceived disconnection between the profession and the RCVS and with it was a cause of frustration amongst people in practice; was it possible to have a 'Keep-In-Touch' (KIT) day approach where Council and members of the College went into practice to observe? This would achieve two things: improvement to the sense of connection and improvement to the understanding of what was happening 'on the ground' as there was a difference between knowing about something and fully understanding it;
- arguing that point, there were many people on Council that *did* work with the profession, and who made themselves open to question by colleagues whilst in practice, which helped with communication;

- the College, and Council, was taking every opportunity to speak to people, not just in official forums such as the RQT, but also unofficially when they were out and about. The pressure in clinical practice was immense so it might not be the right time to approach them, however, the College, through its Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) assessors, did visit practices.

24. The report was noted.

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

RCVS Knowledge – update from Executive Director

25. The Executive Director (ED) provided an outline of the work undertaken by RCVS Knowledge (RCVSK):

- inspiration for some of the work came from human health and the public sector such as the National Health Service (NHS) for humans, and the medical errors and subsequent consequences in the United States of America (USA) where they looked at the systems in place and put structures together, effectively re-designing the systems to get a better understanding of what was going on in practical terms, particularly as harm would not only affect the patient but also the care giver. The first part was capacity building, to improve the knowledge around the piece, working medicine and quality improvement to provide support via educational courses; primary medicine courses; and, how to translate that into practice on a practitioner's course;
- newly-released quality improvement 'box sets' – bite-size learning including tools and techniques that can be used to improve animal care and how to measure improvements made; c.500 users per month;
- *Veterinary Evidence* – a practical journal that provides open access summaries about the latest evidence on single-topics; read by c. 5,000 people per month;
- Library and Information Services – the Team was working out of the Westminster Archives helping a membership of approximately 2,000;
- provided refugee support with educational materials for those coming into the country;
- *InFocus* – a journal watch that amassed the latest literature that had been issued over the last three months and provided reviews that were sent out to the veterinary profession;
- historical archive – when the College moved out of Belgravia House, items listed included:
 - 163 oil paintings
 - 4 busts
 - 7 plaques
 - 2 boards

- 1,000s of boxes of books
 - podcasts – downloaded 84,000 times to date;
 - awards given – for education and training aspects;
 - national audit for animal neutering;
 - Canine Cruciate Registry: database to collate information from veterinary teams and from animal owners;
 - anti-microbial resistance (AMR) hub – for small, and farm, animals; translating that through capacity building to help the profession improve safety and effectiveness, provide guidance and support and how to integrate the culture to drive change forwards.
26. The ED encouraged members of Council to sign up as Trust members to help support the work RCVS did.

27. Comments and questions included:

- the growing evidence within the medical profession in terms of a culture of incivility, which could be the language or behaviour of others, and how it impacted their patients and had a detrimental effect could be a useful tool when considering animal care;
 - it was being used to put systems in place of how to combat that and stop ‘hierarchy’ amongst teams;
- it was worth emphasising the impact on people and remembering how a person spoke or acted would stay with the owner of an animal for the rest of their lives;
- regarding medical mistakes, there was probably no veterinary practitioner that had not made a catastrophic mistake and, when speaking to others about the experience, most happened when under immense pressure and working alone; often with ‘near misses’ it was the questioning of a good veterinary nurse that prevented the mistake from occurring.

28. The update was noted.

Estate strategy – update

29. The CEO reported that the Hardwick Street Refurbishment Group (HSRG) was now working on a tender for project management; the building was a lot bigger than Belgravia House, so the needs of the College and the commercial strategy would also be considered as the building was currently tenanted. There had been a good session at the recent Staff Away Day about what staff would like to see in the new building, and that would be fed into the Group.
30. Staff continued to work at We Work where it was noted that the communal areas were well used and the experience of being in a shared workspace would be a planning tool for ideas. More door passes would be available shortly, and that would provide more flexibility for those wishing to work in the office.

31. The Director of Operations (DoOps) reported that when the College had left Belgravia House it had been as a tenant and there was a list of dilapidations that the landlord wished the College to pay for; negotiations had been undertaken and it was hoped to agree the amount by the end of September.
32. Following the survey of the building that was as an outcome of the Grenfell Tower disaster and the resulting need to replace the exterior cladding where the College Flat was based, it was noted that work was now complete.
33. The update was noted.

Discretionary Fund

34. The DoOps explained that the Discretionary Fund was an allocation in the budget for expenditure on items not provided for to allow for new ideas within a budget year, and to enable strategically important changes to be fast-tracked. There were financial controls in place and the provision in the 2022 budget was £150,000. The expenditure was reported through Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) as part of the Management Accounts.
35. Since the last meeting there had been three applications to the Fund that had amounted to £67,000:
 - for a workforce model;
 - preparatory work for the legal reform changes;
 - amendments to the IT system for the new sustainability requirements in the PSS.
36. There was £43,000 left in the Fund until the year end.
37. There were no comments, and the update was noted.

Council Culture Project – embedding culture (taken out of order)

38. The CEO reminded Council that this project had been underway for some time and that progress as part of the first phase of activity had been marked by various approved items at the June meeting.
39. It was noted that there had been a lot of press interest that focussed on one particular line in the 'how we work' document, which was the idea that there should be support and respect for the decisions made by Council. There was the impression that robust discussion was stifled, but she hoped that Council recognised that was not the case and that the importance of different opinions and discussion that ultimately supported a unified outcome remained. This was stressed in the line above the one that had garnered interest, i.e. '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'. Furthermore, this was not a new idea and had been in place for a long time: the College's motto was 'Vis unita fortior' (strength through unity).

40. The first phase of the work had allowed Senior Team members to work closely with Council to help build the relationships and be a positive part of the culture work and the next phase of work was before Council for discussion and agreement.

41. The Director of HR (People) (DoHR) reported that positive work had been undertaken in the five key areas; some of the outstanding actions would be carried forward to phase two. She asked Council members to let her know if they were interested in working on phase two and that there would be one group rather than five taking work forward. Council was reassured that before any decisions were made Council as a whole would have the opportunity to discuss matters and sought approval for the proposed way forward and topics as outlined in the paper.

42. A vote was taken (as a whole):

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

43. Professor May, Mr Rendle, and Ms Worthington experienced technical difficulties and submitted email votes that were included in the figures.

44. Council approved the process for taking forward phase two of activity and the proposed topics for phase two as outlined at Annex A to the paper by a majority vote.

Policy for handling complaints about Council (and committee) members – amendments

45. The Registrar introduced the paper and stated that it had been before Council at its June meeting and the paper before it incorporated the outstanding points that Council wished to be brought back:

- the potential for appeal / review of the decision;
- when / if any complaint should be made public;
- clarity around the process if a member resigned before the outcome of the complaint had been reached but then applied for re-election and whether the complaint should be re-activated if it was within a certain timeframe e.g. two years.

46. When this was discussed previously there had been no conclusion. The Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966 stated that there should be a policy, but that it was up to Council to decide what that policy should be. Regarding the outstanding items:

- it was felt that any review should not be a formal process but rather a review by an external person;
- that complaints should be made public at Stage 2 to align it with the College's disciplinary process i.e. concerns were not made public during investigation and consideration by the Preliminary Investigation Committee and it was only when it reached Disciplinary Committee that any complaint became public;

- whether any complaint should be re-activated if a member that had been complained about had resigned from Council before a decision had been reached, who was subsequently re-elected / re-appointed to Council; the figure of two years for re-activation had been suggested during discussions.

47. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- the policy put pressure on the President making a decision; and re: paragraph 17 of the annexed policy, to have a solicitor '*of at least 10 years' standing*' could be considered discriminatory and suggested the wording should be changed to '*of a certain standing*';
 - o the word could be amended if Council wished;
- why wasn't mediation the first step to the process particularly when it was between two Council members? Going directly into the process was adversarial, by making two people talk to each other could prevent vexatious complaints;
 - o not all complaints would be suitable for mediation and other resolutions may be required; the policy was to allow for maximum flexibility;
- re: paragraph 11 of the policy: if the complainant was unhappy with the outcome, it could be referred to Stage 2; that did not seem appropriate, and it would be better to have an appeal process with different personnel effectively repeating Stage 1. It sounded dangerous and unnecessarily expensive to go automatically to Stage 2;
 - o it was not a definite referral to Stage 2 but that it *might* be referred; if Council did not want this included it could be taken out;
- re: paragraph 18: the ability to get rid of a complaint being investigated by stepping down and then potentially returning to Council a couple of years later, the concern was if there was just a two-year limit there was the capacity for people to use it as a method to escape scrutiny of something they had done, had there been any discussion about making that a longer time period?
 - o yes, there had been discussion about the timeframe and at the last meeting Council had discussed two years, a different figure could be opted for but did not think it should be left open-ended;
- in other areas, if a person was to resign it did not stop the investigation, was it possible for the College to do similar as it appeared weak if a member resigned and the investigation just stopped?
 - o it was a matter of jurisdiction; the College could not investigate if a member was no longer on Council;

- fundamentally, if someone was trying to avoid investigation, the College should try to counter the avoidance; there should be a way to continue the process of investigation and prevent a resignation – the College was trying to be transparent and as open as possible, and it was concerning it could be inadvertently supporting an avoidance mechanism;
 - o it would be useful to think about what the College was trying to do: to continue an investigation once a member was no longer on Council, what was the end point? Council members were not employees. What would be a reasonable timeframe to prevent a member from applying to come back on to Council?

- returning to the wording around mediation, complaints could span a huge range from, for example, being referred to Professional Conduct (ProfCon) Department to the other end where they were dismissed. Working online with less face-to-face contact and actually getting to know one another was to the detriment of relationships and the way in which people worked. Strengthen the language around making every effort to bring parties together rather than progressing more and more down formal, distant, routes; those routes may be clearly appropriate for severe complaints and incidents, but where matters could be repaired it needed to be kept informal to explain the different perspectives;
 - o if the complaint was between two Council members, mediation could be the best way of resolution, however, that was not where all of the complaints arose, they could also come in from the public, or the profession, and sources might not be amenable to mediation particularly when it was on the agreement of two parties;

- support the policy as drafted – no policy was ever going to be perfect. Mediation had to be a discretionary judgement about whether it was appropriate, particularly around any kind of discrimination. The timeframe of two years was arbitrary and was felt to be a reasonable time, but it might be that the College had to learn by experience, and it could review the policy after a certain period. It was important to recognise that the College did not have forced jurisdiction over people in that scenario, they were not employees, so it could not require them not to resign, or to process – that would subsequently entail a one-sided investigation because there was nothing to tell the other party to participate;

- if a complaint was upheld, was there anything to say that a person was ineligible to come back on to Council until any such time a complaint had been resolved?
 - o no, the College was restricted by the VSA and statute.

48. The discussion was drawn to a close.

49. A vote was taken on the understanding that 'yes' would mean Council was happy with the draft as was, and 'no' that the draft required more work:

For:	17
Against:	5
Abstain;	1

Did note vote: 1

50. Dr Richards experienced technical difficulties and submitted an email vote that was included in the figures.
51. The Policy as drafted was approved by a majority vote.
52. It was questioned if the College could commit to a review of the Policy after two years and this was agreed.

Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 – offences

53. The Registrar introduced the paper. In the College's Strategic Plan, it was an item to be reviewed to consider what role the College could undertake with unregistered / unqualified individuals and breaches of the VSA. The paper outlined what was involved regarding private prosecutions and alternative resolutions and highlighted that in England and Wales a private prosecution was practicable, but that in Scotland and Northern Ireland, it was possible in theory, but impossible in reality.
54. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the paper were highlighted and the fines liable would not exceed £100. The amounts were written into statute; the figures summarised in the paper referred to summary convictions in a Magistrate Court; although it was possible to elect to go to a Crown Court – in which case the subsequent costs would be substantially higher, and it should be emphasised that awarded costs may not cover actual costs of bringing the matter to court.
55. Regarding cost benefits:
 - no one else would undertake private prosecutions relating to offences under the VSA;
 - re: lay people, the police and Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) did not participate unless it involved drugs or fraud, as they prioritised resources towards violent crime;
 - the College could pick its own prosecutor and put the message out about reprehensible behaviour.
56. There were two other issues in the veterinary sphere:
 - the College had no investigative powers in order to gather evidence, and it was not the police, so it had to be realistic in managing expectations – it would be unfortunate to give the impression that everything coming to the College would be privately prosecuted. The paper included some figures relating to other regulatory authorities' numbers of cases brought and approximate costs;
 - the College had no powers of entry: if the College wished to go down the route of private prosecutions a formal policy would need to be written up and agreed. If it did not do the policy, then there could be more work undertaken around cease-and-desist letters, better information on the College's website, investigator visitations, etc., but remain aware that the College did not have powers of entry.

57. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- why not have both? Have the information on the website but do not remove the option of private prosecutions; the current fine and potential monetary cost was not in favour of private prosecutions, but the College had been seeking new legislation for a number of years and could it make a strong case for 'having more teeth' in terms of the amount of money people could be fined under the legislation, in which case it might make private prosecutions more viable;
 - o the College could ask for updated fine levels at Magistrate Court level;
 - o re: having both, yes, it would be possible to take exceptional cases forward, however, it should be noted that a lot of activity was around offences where the College joined other agencies as the offences were higher than the VSA and it had to be careful not to interfere with ongoing investigations;
 - o it was possible to have a policy to reserve the right to do something as the College did not need additional powers, but circumstances should be clearly set out before a case was taken on;
- re: the regional differences, was there a danger of, for instance, a bad operator being 'pushed' into Northern Ireland to avoid prosecution, and what would the workload be for College staff to do the investigations and resource implications?
 - o regional differences related more to criminal offences; the College would likely have to take the investigation to external sources with help from internal staff, as such the costs could be substantial;
- private prosecutions have been effective elsewhere when used as a deterrent. The College did not have cases stacked up where this could be used, and costs could be extensive; not adverse to reserving the right and having a policy but with everything on the agenda at the moment with the Strategic Plan there was not a burning platform to actively seek resources;
- regarding the messaging around this topic, the College should say to members that their registration was important and that it was going to look into the matter of private prosecutions, and draw up the criteria and the messaging around when it would be suitable; it was not a matter of 'a' or 'b', but rather to do both;
 - o happy to draft a policy around it that could potentially then be used following failure to act after cease-and-desist letters, visitations, etc.;
- there were certain acts of veterinary surgery regulated by someone else e.g the Association of Equine Dental Technicians (AEDT), when situations involved other bodies, was it possible to include in the cease-and-desist letters a mention that the College would notify the relevant regulatory body? Also, a £100 fine was not a big deterrent, could people not regulated by

other bodies go down the route that fraud as an imprisonable offence? – put forward that type of investigation to make it more of a deterrent;

- where people were regulated by others it would depend on the Statutory Instrument they had (or not); the issue with fraud where the police and CPS were involved, the College already passed the information along;
- there was the opportunity to build the College's reputation – it had 'teeth' when regulating the veterinary professions, but not teeth when regulating others; when there were no veterinary surgeons involved cases had to be taken to Trading Standards, but the College could help someone take a case to them;
- there were limits to what the College was able to do; what people wanted to happen was to pass the message to the RCVS and leave it to them to progress; there was a communication piece to do but the College could not take something forward on behalf of someone else – this could be included in the draft policy;

Professor Parkin left the meeting

- there was the potential that this could back-fire on the College in the sense of raising the expectations of the public and the profession, when it was limited by the powers of investigation; it might not be able to put evidence together for a successful prosecution that would show the College in a negative light;
- this had been alluded to in the paper with the pros and cons. There was a lot to be taken into account before a decision could be made, including the positive and negative outcomes coupled with a large bill attached;
- this was not a 'burning battle' that the College was particularly worried about; in the first instance set out expectations about what the College could, and could not, do and how to set a case for a realistic process. The College was not just there to worry about veterinary surgeons but also to protect the public and animal welfare; it also had to be clear about actual costs;
- there was an important message about how much the College thought about this tempered with lessons learned from e.g. the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA); clear messaging was a benefit to the profession and to animal welfare;
- the College did care, but its hands were tied with limited funds and current legislation, this could be made clear.

58. The discussion was drawn to a close.

59. No vote was taken. It was agreed that the Registrar would draft a private prosecutions policy that set out criteria when it would / would not be appropriate for agreement by Council at a later date and the process to follow. Information on the College's website would be updated.

Public Advisory Group

60. The CEO introduced the paper, and highlighted how the Public Advisory Group (PAG) could be set up; the application to join; its aims and how it could be used to address some of the issues faced when communicating to the public; with initial progress and success of the group to be reviewed at the end of the first year (review might be pushed back dependent on levels of activities undertaken by the group).

61. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:

- this was not without risk and could raise expectations of what the public was able to do; and could be problematic if a group member felt their contribution was not useful / used by the College; or the member was not used in multiple meetings;
- could it be announced as a pilot scheme enabling it to be stopped easier if needed?
- what was the College doing for veterinary professionals to engage with it as there were complaints that the College did not listen to the profession? Re: paragraph 3a, b, and d, the College should do the same for veterinary professionals otherwise the two parts (vets and public) were not being treated equally; would not support one without the other;
 - o the multiple veterinary associations provided the voices of the profession; the College had a lot of engagement with them, whereas for animal owners there were not many routes to have their voices heard;
- support this work as a pilot scheme. Re: Annex B, draft invitation: paragraph 3: it came across that the public would be setting the standards, etc., could that be reworded?
- knowing there were specific lobby groups, include a sentence to inform why the profession was there; to be part of a legal matrix for *all* legal animal activities: some might feel ethical standards need improvement; not support the farm industry; not support legal animal experimentation, etc. As a profession it was important that everyone coming on saw themselves as comprehensively contributing to the benefits of the whole profession, not in any way try to progress things that undermined the College's legal role or growth.

62. A vote was taken to approve the draft Terms of Reference for the PAG per Annex A to the paper and the draft invitation to apply per Annex B to the paper (as a whole):

For:	21
Against:	0
Abstain:	2

63. Dr Richards experienced technical difficulties and submitted an email vote that was included in the figures.

64. The PAG Terms of Reference and invitation to apply was approved by a majority vote.

Notices of Motion

65. There were no notices of motion received.

Questions

66. There were no questions received.

Any other College business (unclassified items)

67. The President reported the breaking news that Her Majesty the Queen, the College's patron, was under medical supervision and on behalf of Council sent her its best wishes.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)

68. There were no new items to add to the College's Risk Register.

Dates of next meetings

69. The dates of the next meetings were:

- Wednesday (PM), 9 November 2022 to be held in person (with hybrid functionality) in closed session, further details and venue to be confirmed;
- Thursday, 10 November 2022, regular scheduled meeting commencing 10:00 am reconvening in the afternoon. To be held in person (with hybrid functionality) in London, venue to be confirmed.

Any other College business (confidential items)

Comments on classified appendix from 9 June 2022 Council meeting

70. There were no comments raised on the classified appendix.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

71. There were no new items to add to the College's Risk Register.

72. The meeting was drawn to a close.

Tour of School of Biodiversity, One Health and Veterinary Medicine

73. Council split into two groups to tour the veterinary school facilities and take the opportunity to interact with university staff and learn more about the facilities and what the school offered.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Advancement of the Professions Committee Report 13 September 2022.
Summary	<p>To note the attached minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022.</p> <p>In particular, to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks were given to Professor J Innes for his work on the Fellowship. • Nominations for the positions of Vice-Chair and member of the Finance and Resource Committee were requested.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	N/A
Author	Jill Macdonald VN Futures Project Lead j.macdonald@rcvs.org.uk / 07867 301723

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
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

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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 Regulation

Minutes of the Advancement of the Professions Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 13 September 2022 at 2:30pm at the Royal College of Nursing, London, and online via Microsoft Teams.

Members:	Mrs B Andrews-Jones	VN Council Vice-Chair, Innovation Lead
	Ms A Boag	Chair, Board of Trustees for RCVS Knowledge
	Dr J Dyer	Council member
	Dr M Gardiner	Council Member, Diversity and Inclusion Group Chair, Global Development Lead
	Professor J Innes*	Chair, RCVS Fellowship Board
	Ms L Lockett	Chief Executive Officer
	Dr S Paterson (Chair)	Junior Vice-President, Environment and Sustainability Lead, Leadership Lead
	Mr M Rendle	VN Council Chair, VN Futures Project Board liaison point
	Dr K Richards	Senior Vice-President, Mind Matters Initiative Chair
	Mr T Walker	Lay Council Member
In attendance:	Mrs A Belcher	Director for Advancement of the Professions
	Ms C Chick*	Senior Leadership Officer
	Dr N Connell	Council member
	Mrs J Dugmore*	Director of Veterinary Nursing
	Miss G Gill	Leadership and Inclusion Manager
	Miss R Greaves	Policy and Public Affairs Officer
	Mr C Gush	Executive Director, RCVS Knowledge
	Miss A Hanson	Mind Matters Initiative Officer
	Mr I Holloway	Director of Communications
	Miss J Macdonald	VN Futures Project Lead
	Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Miss L Pitcher	MMI Outreach and Engagement Senior Officer
Dr L Prescott-Clements*	Director of Education
Mrs L Quigley*	MMI Manager
Miss S Roebel	AP Officer (Temporary)
Miss S Rogers	ViVet Manager
Ms A Youngs	Advancement of the Professions Officer

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the APC and noted that the meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes.
2. Apologies were received from Ms C Chick, Mrs J Dugmore, Prof J Innes, Dr L Prescott-Clements and Mrs L Quigley.
3. All members of the committee and attendees offered an introduction to themselves and their role.
4. The Chair requested nominations for the positions of Vice-Chair and member for the Finance and Resource Committee. Applicants should contact the Chair and Director of Advancement of the Professions by email in the first instance. If there are multiple applicants, then an election will be held.

Declarations of Interest

5. No new declarations of interest were received.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 May 2022

6. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

7. The first meeting for the Focused / Limited Licensure Working Group was reported to be a successful meeting with a real sense of the direction of travel achieved, further meetings are planned as per the terms of reference.
8. Social and environmental sustainability updates for the Practice Standards Scheme went through Council and were approved and are now in the guidance.
9. Fellowship – discourse platform is about to be launched.

Updates from APC workstreams

10. Since updates from the workstreams were available within the meeting pack (APC September 22 AI03), the Chair requested that rather than repeating the updates verbally, the time would be used to pick out various themes and provide opportunities for questions.

11. The Committee considered these updates, as well as other specific matters that were brought to it for discussion and, in some cases, decision. These are highlighted below, in addition to the main questions and comments prompted by each update.

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

12. The Chair welcomed the new Chair for the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, Dr Tshidi Gardiner.
13. Main areas of activity to note were the Guidance on Religious Clothing, the Chronic Illness Survey planning, the Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit planning, and the preparation of a submission to the Advanced HE EDI conference to present a paper. She was also looking forward to celebrating Black History Month.
14. A request via social media had been made for those from Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority groups who wished to contribute to the Leadership workstream as part of the overall campaign. The aim was for a minimum of one interview/video per month throughout the campaign.

Fellowship

15. The Chair thanked Professor John Innes, in his absence, and as he was standing down as Chair after the elections, for the commitment and work completed to push the Fellowship scheme forward over the past three years.
16. General themes to note were election of new Fellows, upcoming Fellowship Day, and updates and discussions around the Science Advisory Panel and Quality of Life webinars.
17. Elections were open for Chair, Chair of Science Advisory Group and a Projects Officer. It was reported that over 50% of the electorate had already voted online. Online polls were due to close on Friday 16 September and the week following for postal votes. Results would be announced the week after next due to the official mourning period for Her Majesty the Queen.

Global Strategy

18. The Chair welcomed the new Global Lead, Dr Tshidi Gardiner.
19. General activities to note were the joint hosting, with the British Veterinary Association, of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) General Assembly in June, participation in the International Veterinary Regulators Network summer CPD events, planning underway for an autumn meeting via Mind Matters International, and forthcoming presentations at the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) conference and the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) conference. The Overseas Members' Communication Strategy was also discussed.
20. With respect to the FVE General Assembly, it was commented that this had been an extremely successful event, that had received lots of compliments. It was reiterated what an important organisation FVE was in providing contacts when requiring expertise with particular queries.

21. The CEO updated the committee on the CLEAR conference in Louisville that she was attending and speaking, at where the focus would be on the role of regulation in mental health. It is felt that this, and the AAVSB conference, would offer the opportunity to restate the RCVS's vision to be a compassionate regulator, as well as finding out what other nations were doing to address workforce issues, the regulation of telemedicine, and other topics that were presently top of our agenda.

Innovation

22. The Chair welcomed the new Innovation Lead, Belinda Andrews-Jones.

23. The key area of ongoing work related to the Workforce Summit.

24. Spaces were still available for the Design Thinking webinar.

25. The Workforce Action Plan would be sent out shortly for to the Committee to review. At this stage this would be a draft version. This has been a collaborative effort from present workstreams as well as Education, Communications and Veterinary Nursing. There was a request for Committee members to review and feedback on whether the draft was clear, accurate, and reflected activities in the workstreams, and whether there were any opportunities for collaborations going forward. After this the document would be published.

26. It was reported that the recent Question Time in Glasgow had demonstrated that workforce issues remained at the top of the list or priorities for practitioners.

Leadership

27. Updates included the Leadership Library (which was moving forward well), the Academy Leadership course, and the Leadership stories.

28. There were potential plans to move the Edward Jenner course onto the Academy. Although this would require a lot of work it would be hugely beneficial due to hosting it alongside other CPD.

29. It was reenforced that the delay with the course had not been due to the RCVS but that there were ongoing discussions with the NHS.

30. It was asked if there would be the opportunity to follow-up with those who had completed the course to better understand the value it brought to them and their practice. One of the issues was that the NHS owned the data for one of the attendance lists. Delivering the course through the Academy instead of via Future Learn would mean that, going forward, we would own future attendee data and then be able to use this to compile analytics for future discussions and decisions.

Mind Matters Initiative

31. The Chair welcomed the new Chair for MMI, Dr Kate Richards.

32. Updates included university outreach, the Kite app, the Sarah Brown Research Grant, training including Mental Health First Aid, student training and mental health in the workplace.
33. A point was raised, which had been raised at a recent conference. regarding a letter that was sent out to retiring members by the College, and whether it would be useful to signpost mental health resources within this letter. Retirement could lead to vets and nurses feeling disconnected from a profession they had known their entire career.
34. It was also noted that veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses were sent a letter after 50 and 30 years of service respectively. It was suggested that 50 years was too long a period, and that veterinary surgeons should also be sent a congratulatory letter after 30 years of service. This would be passed to the Registration team for consideration.
35. Clarity was requested regarding the reason to not renew the Kite app contract. It was reported that engagement with the app had been high at events and when performing outreach, however people would sign up and then drop off, and this cycle had been repeated a few times. It became clear from the feedback that whilst they valued the content, members of the professions seemed to want to be able to access content in one segment, rather than through the micro-learning approach that the Kite app utilised. It was discussed why this may be so, although no strong evidence for a specific reason existed currently. The plan was to re-use the content from the app within the MMI hub on the MMI website to enable people to access it in their own time

RCVS Knowledge

36. Updates included a new Deputy Editor in Chief, celebrating five years of the In Focus journal and the Canine Cruciate Register.
37. The new strategic plan was currently being worked on, which will be shared in due course. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees would take place in three weeks' time.
38. It was reported that first-year Glasgow students had given positive feedback on the resources available via RCVS Knowledge.
39. The team was commended for its work on the Canine Cruciate Register so far.

Environment and Sustainability

40. Key updates were the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) Sustainability work, with congratulations to all those who had pushed this forward. An update on progress with the Net Zero Surgery Working Party would be provided later in the meeting.

VN Futures

41. Key areas of update included Strategy, Action Plan, School Ambassadors Scheme, Vet Team in a Box and Mind Matters.
42. It was highlighted that there had been a review of how the systems worked and the collaboration with the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) and that this process had been beneficial.

43. There would be some interactive sessions at the upcoming BVNA Congress.
44. A discussion regarding the School Ambassadors Scheme highlighted that further guidance on navigating the STEM system and assisting ambassadors in sourcing those requiring careers information would be beneficial, as would the facility for ambassadors to communicate with and support each other.
45. A suggestion was made to also investigate schools and other sources of speakers (besides STEM) that required careers information and broaden the scope.
46. It was commented that utilisation of 'the profession as parents' and advocates of their own profession could be useful.

Oral update: The UK Health and Climate Change (UK HAAC)

47. A project group was working on a report to work towards net zero surgery, which aimed to be a 'how-to' guide for surgeons and surgical staff. Key knowledge gaps included how the surgical team could enable change, how single-use could be reduced and what the opportunities were for rationalising diagnostic care within surgery, working towards reducing carbon footprint overall, and how this could be addressed within the UK and internationally. The aim was to complete the report by the start of next year (2023).
48. It was explained that this work would be evidence-based, and once this returns from UKHACC, that this is used as a tool to make decisions on further activities by FSAP or RCVS.
49. Conversations had been had with major employers, and it was recognised that independent and charity practice should also be part of these conversations.
50. Data was being gathered regarding the most common surgeries within practice – small, production animal and equine, and planned and emergency.
51. It was suggested that it might be useful to produce some infographics regarding the biggest carbon footprint contributors with regard to surgery.
52. There was a synergy with resource-saving, such as appropriate use and safer surgery, so there were multiple benefits to the professions engaging with this project.

Discussion: Fellowship Science Advisory Panel Quality of Life (QoL) Discussions

53. Following previous sessions, there was the suggestion to look more to the scientific factors than the emotional impact, which had been well covered in the panel discussions. Numbers were restricted for the events to ensure it was open to professionals only. However now that the topic had had initial exploration, it was appropriate for it to be opened up to all. There were concerns that if animal owners were present at events, then conversations could be misconstrued. If a more scientific approach was taken this would not be so appealing to animal owners.
54. The following points were raised during discussion:

55. The approach to having discussions with owners and the link to QoL was also seen to be valuable. Partnership with owners is an important aspect of QoL discussions.
56. The principle of remembering that even amongst veterinary professionals there were animal owners, so messaging and speaker guidelines on such topics, and managing this sensitively, was reinforced as a good principle.
57. Inviting animal owner organisations into the discussion and gaining their perspective could be valuable.
58. In-person events were seen as useful.
59. Objective evaluation of QoL could be a useful tool to explore, and it was recognised that there were some tools that currently existed but were not hugely well known or used.
60. The lack of data on QoL was mentioned and how it may be useful to be able to have a measure of QoL. The animal owner would also need to be part of that conversation.
61. Good quantifiable data was difficult to gather on QoL, specifically with issues of anthropomorphisation and human attitudes to different species and animal temperaments.
62. The myth that the RCVS demanded 'gold standard' had been the starting point for these sessions. It was stressed that the College had never talked in such terms and that conversations needed to be individualised – provision of *contextualised* care was important.
63. One of the facets that needs to be addressed was One Health, since many QoL issues arose out of emotional issues for the owner and the inability to let go. Vet professionals needed to be empowered to have these difficult conversations with the owners.

Discussion: Antibiotic Amnesty Week – 18-24 November 2022

64. The aim of the amnesty, which was primarily a comms and education piece, was to promote awareness of safe disposal, disposal routes of unused and unwanted antibiotics, reduce hoarding and reduce unsafe disposal, and the potential negative impact on the environment of inappropriate antibiotic disposal from both human and veterinary prescriptions.
65. Promotion would be via press releases, social media, posters in human GP surgeries, dental practices, pharmacies; and this year they would like the veterinary professions to be involved. The aim was to use the resources developed by the initiative but also to develop some veterinary-relevant resources. The aim as to also promote the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Hub and ask members of the professions from different species groups to provide short videos to camera. There were a lot of tools available via RCVS Knowledge.
66. The challenges of such an initiative were discussed, including that animal owners wouldn't be compensated for the return of antibiotics (and this could cause additional difficulties due to the current financial climate); that veterinary staff needed to be aware of how to dispose of antibiotics

appropriately; and disposal/burning of unused drugs would be seen as having a negative impact on the environment.

67. The nurse's role was raised, and that veterinary nurses may often be the ones who dispense, receive and dispose of the medication and ultimately have the interaction with the owner.

Discussion: Fellowship Day

68. This year the event would be held in person for the first time in three years. A discussion was had during the meeting to generate ideas for interactive sessions for Fellowship Day in a bid to generate a greater level of discussion within the Fellowship. It was noted that the Quality of Life FSAP Sub group would be meeting the following week to discuss next steps on this topic specifically.

69. The Committee was requested to consider potential topics for the second interactive session on the day, and topics raised were:

- The link between human and animal abuse
- Veganism and veterinary practice
- The philosophical and practical elements of behaviour medicine – should behaviour be considered veterinary surgery as it makes a physical impact on the animal, and should we regulate animal behaviourists?

70. It was decided to take the behavioural topic forward and Ben Myring would work on a title for the session. Speaker suggestions were made, and the Committee asked to send over any further ideas.

Any other business

71. The Director of Advancement of the Professions thanked Abi Hanson for her work with the Mind Matters Initiative, as she moved to a new role within the Communications Department at the College.

Date of next meeting

72. The Chair closed the meeting noting the next meeting would be in the afternoon of 15 November 2022 and would be a virtual meeting.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	ARC meeting minutes - 15 September 2022
Summary	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Thursday, 15 September 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Classified Appendix
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer / Secretary h.haid@rcvs.org.uk 0207 2020 797

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

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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²Classification 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 Regulation

Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 15 September 2022

Members:

Prof D Bray	Lay member of RCVS Council
Mr K Gill	Lay member
Dr M M S Gardiner	RCVS Council Member
Mr V Olowe	Lay member and Vice Chair
Ms J Shardlow	Lay member and Chair

In attendance:

Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Ms J Delaloye	Head of Finance
Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms H Haid	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Manager
Ms K Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager

Apologies for absence

1. No apologies for absence were received.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest to record.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 May 2022

3. An amendment to a paragraph in the Confidential Appendix was agreed to provide clarity. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

CEO update

4. The CEO provided the Committee with an update on RCVS activities generally, and against the Strategic Plan. The following points were noted:
 - The College had launched the RCVS Academy, which was a learning platform for vets and vet nurses to aid them in meeting professional standards.
 - The College had hosted an event at the House of Lords to discuss veterinary legislative reform with key stakeholders. There will be a meeting in the House of Lords with Ministers and MPs in October.
 - The 'How We Work' statement/policy had been agreed by Council as part of phase one of the Council Culture Project. At its recent meeting, Council had approved phase two of the Project - embedding culture - which would subsequently be undertaken by one group of Council members rather than the previous five groups.
 - The building project board had met with potential project managers to carry out a strategic review of the opportunities at Hardwick Street. The College was currently deciding on who to appoint to undertake this review as well as looking at alternative temporary office space. This would be discussed further at the next Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) meeting.
 - A paper had been before Council that outlined how private prosecutions could prove to be an expensive and lengthy process. It was also noted that the current maximum fine to penalise a person who was not a vet but who is undertaking veterinary activities, was £100. A further paper would be produced for the November Council meeting.
 - A one-off payment of £500, prorated for those working part-time, is to be offered to all RCVS employees to support staff in line with the cost-of-living crisis; further discussions on the salary budget for 2023 were to be discussed at the next FRC meeting.
5. Further confidential information is contained in paragraph 1 of the classified appendix.
6. It was confirmed that activities under the Strategic Plan that were not progressing well would be transferred to the risk register.

Election of Vice-Chair

7. A vote for the Vice-Chair position in the Committee took place with the choice between two members. Both candidates were commended on their excellent credentials and suitability for the role. Victor Olowe was elected as new Vice-Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Assurance Map update

8. The Governance Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Assurance Map.

9. The Committee was informed that the process of putting it together was still in hand. It was confirmed that the map would be added to the library on Board Effect once completed and it should be ready for review by the November ARC meeting.

Action: Completed Assurance Map to be added to the agenda of the next ARC meeting.

Corporate Risk Register

10. The Governance Manager introduced the Corporate Risk Register and outlined key risks and additions to the register since the last Committee meeting.
11. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 2-5 of the classified appendix.

Risk Register: Finance Department

12. The Head of Finance presented the Finance Risk Register to the Committee. Three key risks and the mitigations against them were highlighted. An insight into the structure of the Finance Team, its activities, and the difficulties it experienced due to staff shortage in 2021 was also provided.
13. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 6-12 of the classified appendix.

ENQA: Brief update and Risk Register

14. The Education Quality Improvement Manager provided the Committee with a brief update on the College's activities regarding the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and presented the ENQA Risk Register.
15. It was confirmed that the terms of reference for ENQA had been received and were currently being checked. They would be published on the RCVS website as well as the ENQA website in due course.
16. It was also confirmed that the first draft of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been presented to the Senior Team for comments. The final version of the SAR would be circulated at the next ARC meeting in November.
17. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 13-15 of the classified appendix.

RCVS Governance Document update

18. The Governance Manger updated the Committee on the progress of the RCVS Governance Manual. It was confirmed that the document has been presented to the CEO for comments. It will be presented to the Committee in early 2023.

Action: Final RCVS Governance Manual to be added to the agenda of the February ARC meeting.

Charity Governance Code full progress review

19. The Governance Manager presented the Committee with the RCVS Governance Code model, which had been tailored to the College.
20. The comments from Senior Team were highlighted regarding the work being done in line with each category as well as progress. It was confirmed that the dates for each category would be determined. The potential for reporting on the code was put forward to the Committee and the Committee agreed that an update on key points rather than a full report on the code would be useful to demonstrate transparency. This would be put forward to the Senior Team.
21. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 16-17 of the classified appendix.

Any other Business (AOB)

22. Appreciation was expressed for the College's move to BoardEffect for meeting papers and the Committee agreed that it was easy to use.
23. Further confidential information is contained in paragraph 18 of the classified appendix.

Date of next meeting

24. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 17 November 2022 at 10:00 am, online.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Education Committee Minutes 13 September 2022
Summary	Education Committee Minutes 13 September 2022
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk/ 020 7202 0777

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
Classified appendix	Confidential	1

Education Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022

Members:	Dr Abbie Calow	
	Dr Niall Connell	
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin	
	Mrs Susan Howarth	
	*Professor Chris Proudman	
	Professor Stuart Reid	
	Professor Susan Rhind	
	Dr Kate Richards	- Chair
	Ms Anna Bradbury	- Student representative
	*Ms Kate Dakin	- Student representative
By invitation:	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Subcommittee Chair
	Professor Stephen May	- Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- PQSC Chair
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- VetGDP subcommittee Chair and Observer
	*Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Group
In attendance:	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Dr Jude Bradbury	- Examinations Manager
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	- Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	- Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Ms Beckie Smith	- Senior Education Officer
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	- Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	- Quality Assurance Manager
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	- CEO

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were sent from Chris Proudman, Kate Dakin, and Nigel Gibbens.
2. A minute's silence was held to remember Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Declarations of interest

3. Abbie Calow declared that the discussion on PDP would have a direct effect on colleagues, Sue Paterson declared that as a specialist she would be conflicted on item 18b and Susan Rhind declared that she is part of a small panel review of Veterinary Education in Australia and New Zealand.

Minutes

4. The minutes Education Committee of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 and the joint meeting of Education Committee and Registration Committee on the 1 August 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising

5. The Committee agreed Dr Calow as vice-chair of Education Committee and Ms Howarth as the representative on Finance and Resources Committee.
6. It was asked that the decision around revisitations and which version of standards to use, made following the meeting, to be noted. It was agreed that any revisits to a school, following award of Accreditation for a shorter period, would be conducted against the standards in effect at the time of the original visitation.

Education Department update

7. The Director of Education, Dr Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. Dr Prescott-Clements had attended the RCVS Regional Question Time in Glasgow where there was a lot of positive discussion around VetGDP, EMS and other educational issues. Following the initial consultation from the Australian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) it's encouraging to see that they have followed our lead in the standards format and also in the risk-based outcomes focused methodology. The Committee heard that the RCVS have been approached by AVBC for some advice around OSCE development from their examinations committee. The Education department had also been approached by DEFRA, who are looking at their post graduate programme for public health and how this can be linked with the VetGDP.

Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)

Report of the sub-committee meetings held on the 23 June and 10 August 2022

8. The minutes of the PQSC meetings held in June and August were received. Members heard that the sub-committee had considered the scope and focus of forthcoming verification visits to Glasgow and Dublin, following on from their virtual visitations in 2021.

9. There had been discussion around updates to the guidance that sat alongside the new accreditation standards, in particular the guidance relating to appraisal mechanisms for all staff and EMS preclinical exemptions for those that could demonstrate extensive prior experience in a particular species.
10. Reports from the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) board meetings were presented, and proposals for a change in examination timings agreed to allow more time between the written exam and the OSCEs. This was because the current gap between the written examination results and the OSCE examination was not long enough to process the volume of appeals received, and because there had been issues with the length of time taken to process visas for some candidates.
11. It was reported that the August PQSC meeting had been in person, where the committee had considered the Australasian annual monitoring reports. Requests for further clarifications had been made, which would be communicated through the AVBC office.
12. It was noted that AVMA and AVBC had both agreed to undertake a full revisit to the University of Melbourne in 2023, following their virtual visitation in 2021, and in line with the decision made by Education Committee. It was also noted that this full joint international revisit would replace the verification visit, required following a virtual visitation.
13. A question was raised around the language used in the Glasgow verification visit scope, and whether “recommendation” was appropriate when the vocabulary used the word “must”, which implied deficiencies. It was noted that this terminology was consistent in RCVS visit reports, with recommendations being things the school ‘must’ do in order to meet a standard, and suggestions being things the schools ‘should’ or ‘could’ do to go above and beyond meeting the threshold of a standard.

Conflict of interest policy guidance for EC and PQSC

14. The Committee were presented with a paper providing guidelines as to what may constitute a conflict of interest for those elected or appointed to undertake business on behalf of the RCVS. The Committee reviewed the paper and asked for some changes to be made:
 - Under the list of examples of loyalties, include “graduate of or current student of”
 - Under the list of loyalties adjust the wording in the bullet point describing applications for employment to only include successful applications and the need for confidentiality if it is too early or not appropriate to disclose that they are leaving one employer for another.
 - Under the list of loyalties, add a time limit of 3 years for consultancy activities
 - Add some further detail under non-financial activities.

ACTION: KW to make amends and circulate to the secretaries of EC and PQSC

ENQA Update

15. The Committee were informed that the first draft of the SAR is with Senior Team and feedback is anticipated shortly. Terms of Reference and a contract have been sent by ENQA and these are being completed as requested by ENQA and will be returned to the secretariat by the end of September. The risk register has been completed and will be presented to Audit and Risk

Committee this week. The Committee were reassured that the process is still on track and within the planned timelines.

Gap analysis of the Office for Students' conditions against the Veterinary Surgeon and Veterinary Nurse accreditation standards

16. Kirsty Williams, Quality Assurance Manager, presented the Committee with a paper exploring the potential impact of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) with drawing as the Designated Qualified Body (DQB) for the Office for students (OfS) on Veterinary Surgeon and Veterinary nursing accreditation events and the impact this may have on the accreditation for both.
17. Mrs Williams was thanked for her excellent analysis and agreed that the paper could be shared with university staff to summarise the position. The Committee requested clarification over research opportunities, and this will be explored in the Veterinary Nursing (VN) standards, although it is not currently a requirement. The Committee were reminded that a VN programme can also be delivered through a Further Education Institute and therefore there may not be the opportunity for research at this level. The gap analysis states that the financial viability is not checked in the VN standards. This is incorrect and is in fact part of the standard. The gap analysis has been shared with the VN department who have made the appropriate changes and it will be presented to VN Education Committee. The Committee agreed to take no further action, but to keep a "weather eye" on the situation and to understand who is appointed as the DQB from March 2023.

Covid Temporary Policy review:

Covid Updates from Schools

18. One of the few remaining temporary policy changes put in place as a response to original lockdown restrictions was the quarterly updates requested from schools, detailing any changes made to the programme as a result of the pandemic, and steps taken to mitigate the effects.
19. It had previously been discussed in committee whether RCVS could stop requesting these now that most schools were reporting that all changes had either been reverted to pre-pandemic operations or adopted into the programme. With the end of the academic year, it was asked again whether this continual cycle of review could end, as data was being requested every three months, as well as the regular cycle of annual monitoring.
20. Members agreed that there was no merit in continuing these updates and that it was timely to end now. Members were reassured that regular annual monitoring would pick up any emerging concerns, and that RCVS could scale things back up should further (or new) restrictions be reimposed at a later date.
21. A vote was held, and all were in favour of stopping the 3-monthly reviews.

**ACTION: RCVS to end the 3-monthly cycle of requesting and reviewing vet school Covid plans.
EMS Requirements**

The Requirements for class of 2027

22. Education Committee confirmed that the EMS requirements for the incoming first years (class of 2027) would be set at the standard amount of 12 weeks pre-clinical, and 26 weeks clinical EMS.

University of Nottingham April cohorts

23. Although the University of April cohort started later than those in the “normal” September cohorts, they still graduated in the same year. It had not previously been formalised as to what cohort group they would be included in, and therefore what their EMS requirements would be. Therefore, it was also confirmed that the April cohorts from the University of Nottingham would need to meet the same requirements of the cohort group that would have started in the previous September. For example, those graduating in December 2024 would be included within the wider class of 2024 cohort group.

Review of August 2022 completion rates

24. As part of the on-going temporary EMS policy reviews, Education Committee was asked to consider EMS completion data submitted from schools at the end of August. It was noted that there were no further reductions agreed to at the last meeting in May.
25. It as noted that the class of 2022 would have graduated over summer, with no reports to the RCVS that students were unable to meet the reduced requirement of 13 weeks clinical EMS.
26. Similarly, the class of 2025 would have moved into their clinical years having already completed their reduced pre-clinical EMS requirement of 6 weeks.
27. The class of 2023 was noted to either be on track to, or in some cases, already met the reduced requirement of 13 weeks clinical EMS.
28. Although having no reductions to their requirement, it was noted that the class of 2026 were well on track to meet the standard requirement of 12 weeks pre-clinical EMS.
29. However, it was noted that the placement completions of clinical EMS for the class of 2024 was still lower in comparison to the other cohorts, and the rate was lower than what would normally be expected by August in a “normal” year. Therefore, it was agreed to further reduce the clinical EMS requirement for the class of 2024 from 23 weeks to 20 weeks.

Action: RCVS to amend the clinical EMS requirements for the Class of 2024

Further reviews

30. Education Committee were also asked to consider whether to carry on with the regular reviews to the temporary policy, considering that the reviews were being carried out based on the availability of placements due to the knock-on effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and with restrictions having ended in August 2021 and cohorts being able to meet reduced requirements, would they still be necessary.

31. It was reported that students were still having problems with being able to secure placements, whilst some providers were still citing reasons to do with the pandemic for not being able to take students on, others were now citing more separate issues such as work force shortages, with other providers simply being fully booked up or only willing to take on students from particular schools. Whilst these are all known accepted other problems that the EMS system, it was acknowledged that on the whole the issues with EMS availability were no longer mainly due to the pandemic.
32. Therefore, recognising that the reviews were originally carried out as a response to lockdown measures, where placements could not physically take place, and noting the earlier decision to end the three monthly Covid updates from schools, it was agreed that the regular reviews of EMS temporary policy would no longer take place. However, placement completion rates could still be monitored by schools, and RCVS would be able to respond quickly should any further need for reductions arise.

EMS Requirements – student resits

33. RCVS had also been requested to review the requirements in the temporary EMS Policy around students that were resitting years. The rules had stated that students that needed to repeat a year of their studies whilst still being registered as a veterinary student would need to meet the EMS requirement of the year group that they would be graduating with. In some instances, this would mean students would need to meet an increased requirement which potentially may not have been possible without delaying graduations, and therefore the request had been put to Education Committee.
34. Education Committee had initially considered this via correspondence, however due to the complexity of the discussions, it was decided that this would benefit from an in-person discussion, to ensure that the correct decision could be reached.
35. As noted during the discussions via correspondence, there may have been a misunderstanding on what the term “resitting” meant. Clarification was therefore sought prior to the meeting, and it was noted that there were three different groups that were potentially being affected by the current rules:
 - a) Students repeating the year due to academic reasons, and being registered as veterinary students
 - b) Students repeating the year due to health reasons
 - c) Students resitting assessments and not being registered as veterinary students
36. The existing rules already stated that those students who were intercalating and not registered as veterinary students during that time, would be required to meet the requirements of the original year group that they started in. Therefore, Education Committee agreed to amend the rules to state that this would be the same for students resitting assessments and not being registered as veterinary surgeons.

37. As to not discriminate, it was also agreed to amend the rules for those repeating the year due to health reasons so that they would also need to meet the requirements of the original year group they started in.
38. There was then a discussion on what action to take for those who were repeating the year due to academic reasons. Whilst it was acknowledged that there could be an argument that having an extra year would allow for more time to complete further EMS and that this could be on a benefit, it was also argued that there were a number of reasons why students may be repeating a year of their studies and this may not always be simply down to failing a barrier assessment. With this in mind it was agreed that the rules should also be amended for students that were repeating a year due to academic reasons to meet the requirements of the original year group they started in.
- Action: RCVS to amend the rules for students resitting and repeating years**
39. Discussions relating to the future of EMS, AVBC consultation on new accreditation standards and accreditation agreements with IAWG can be found in the confidential appendix.

CPD

Updates from the CPD Policy & Compliance subcommittee

40. The committee received and noted the minutes from the last meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee. Ms Soreskog-Turp gave a brief overview of discussions at the meeting, which included 1CPD usage and CPD compliance.
41. It was suggested that we should liaise with conference providers to provide QR codes to ease recording in 1CPD and encourage time in lectures to reflect on learning. RCVS has already been in contact with London Vet show and QR codes to pre-populate in 1CPD will be available.
- Action: Update CPD Comms plan to include liaise with Conference Providers**

Statutory Membership Exam (SME): Guidance 2023

42. The proposed updates for the 2023 SME Guidance were presented and changes were discussed. The Committee were asked to decide which wording to use relating to the new section on insurance when seeing practice as there was disparity between the proposal from the SME Board and suggestions from PQSC. The Committee decided that candidates should check for valid insurance and this wording will be use in the Guidance henceforth. The other additions and amendments were approved for publication.
43. The Committee were also asked to discuss where information regarding candidate eligibility to sit the SME (decided by Education Committee in May 2022) should be listed. It was decided to include eligibility within the Exam Guidance in addition to the website.
- Action: RCVS to update SME Guidance and publish for 2023 exam.**

PDP Engagement

44. Ms Soreskog-Turp presented the PDP Engagement paper, which highlighted the fact that it has become very resource intensive to follow up with members who have been enrolled on the PDP for over three years, especially given the concurrent cost of running VetGDP.
45. The committee was asked to consider whether graduates who have been on the PDP for three years or longer should have their accounts automatically disabled this year. They were also asked to consider whether members who had their PDP disabled could submit their prior three years of CPD records to demonstrate that they have been CPD compliant and working in clinical practice.
46. There was a question about whether any exceptions would be made for individuals with extenuating circumstances. The committee was assured that RCVS will make an exception for individuals with extenuating circumstances.
47. There was a question about whether some members who did not complete their PDP could enrol on VetGDP instead. It was agreed that individuals who request to enrol on VetGDP could be permitted to if they have not been in clinical practice for at least three years already.
48. The committee agreed that all PDP accounts from 2018 and earlier should be automatically disabled, barring any individuals with extenuating circumstances.
49. It was agreed that a final reminder should be sent to 2019 and 2020 graduates who have not been engaged with the PDP. Members who did not respond to this final reminder or engage with their PDP should have their account disabled.
50. It was agreed that members who had their PDP disabled due to exceeding the deadline or lack of engagement could submit the last three years of their CPD record in order to enrol on CertAVP.

Advanced Practitioner Status

Updates from the Task and Finish Groups

51. Ms Soreskog-Turp introduced the Update from the Task and Finish Group, which summarised the outcomes of the two task and finish groups, which examined the name of Advanced Practitioner, how to promote AP Status, and career pathways for APs and general practitioners.
52. The committee was asked to consider potential replacements for the title of Advanced Practitioner. The committee did not agree on any names, however, it was agreed that the word Specialist should not be used in the new title.
53. There was a suggestion that a brand consultant could be hired to assist in finding the best replacement title for Advanced Practitioner.
54. The committee was asked to consider if the suggested list of invitees to the 21st October stakeholder meeting would be acceptable. It was agreed that the suggested list of stakeholders should be invited to the meeting.

Policy Paper (telemedicine)

55. Professor May presented the APs in Telemedicine paper, which highlighted issues around APs using telemedicine cases towards their total case numbers for their application or reapplication for Advanced Practitioner Status.
56. There was some discussion around the fact that this topic likely intersects with care outcomes policy issues which will be discussed at the November council meeting.
57. The committee agreed that any decisions on whether APs could use telemedicine cases towards their case numbers for their application would need to be postponed until after the November council meeting.

Action: AP Policy Paper to be discussed by EC in February 2023

Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) update

58. Ms Crawford gave an update on the work surrounding the VetGDP. The Committee heard that 2318 veterinary surgeons have now completed the VetGDP Adviser training and 103 had completed the peer review training with further sessions to be held this month. The peer reviewers had been enthusiastic and provided some excellent feedback to the graduates. 111 graduates had completed their VetGDP.

Specialist subcommittee

59. It was previously agreed that the Specialist Sub-Committee would extend its membership back up to six members, and that an application process would be run to recruit the three vacancies. A paper detailing the application process was received and noted.
60. Education Committee agreed to ratify the nominations for the three new members of the Specialist Sub-Committee.

Action: RCVS to inform and appoint new members

Risk Register

61. The committee asked the risk register to include reference to workforce shortages effecting student's completing EMS and also relationships with external regulators.

Action: Education Department to update the risk register

Any other business

62. It was raised by the Heads of School that there was a looming issue around ethical vegans and the RCVS requirement for all students to experience visiting an abattoir. Another anecdotal experience was given where a student had objected to a dairy farm placement where they would have been required to milk cows. It was reported that in forcing students into distressing situations, RCVS could be open to a legal challenge on this accreditation standard, and that the College needed to be mindful of these groups of students.

Date of Next Meeting

63. The date of the next meeting is 15 November 2022 and is to be held remotely.

Britta Crawford

September 2022

b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) minutes - 15 September 2022
Summary	Minutes of the FRC meeting held on Thursday, 15 September 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Confidential Appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Manager / Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk 020 7227 3505

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified Appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

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

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 15 September 2022.

Members:

Ms B Andrews-Jones	Representative from Veterinary Nurses' Council
Dr N T Connell	Chair / RCVS Treasurer
Ms L Ford	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Ms S Howarth	Representative from Education Committee
Ms C-L McLaughlan	Representative from Standards Committee
Professor S A May	Elected member of RCVS Council
Dr S Paterson	Representative from Advancement of Professions Committee
Mr M E Rendle	RCVS Council / Veterinary Nurses Council Chair
Dr K Richards	Representative from PIC/DC Liaison Committee
Ms J S M Worthington	Lay Member of RCVS Council
Mr T J Walker	Lay Member of RCVS Council

*Denotes absence

In attendance:

Ms J Delaloye	Head of Finance
Ms E Ferguson	Registrar / Director of Legal Services
Ms L Hall	People Director
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Director of Operations (DoO)
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Secretary / Governance Officer
Mr D Tysoe	Chief Digital Officer (CTO)

Apologies for absence

1. No apologies for absence were received. Ms Howarth joined the meeting late.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest to record.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022

3. The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting.

Presentation by Investec

4. Mr Michael Turner from Investec (RCVS's Investment Manager) presented an update on the investment portfolio.
5. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 1-3 of the classified appendix.
6. The Committee thanked the Investec Portfolio Manager for the comprehensive presentation and report.

Update from the Director of Operations

7. The Director of Operations (DoO) provided the following updates to the Committee:
 - Since the last FRC meeting in May 2022, no frauds had been reported.
 - No serious data breaches had been reported to the Information Governance Group.
 - Regarding facilities, there had been an issue with the availability of passes for access to the WeWork office space that had now been resolved.
 - On recruitment, there were currently 171 employees, There had been 10 new starters and 8 leavers since the last FRC Meeting.
8. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 4-6 of the classified appendix.

Reports of Committees

9. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 7-8 of the classified appendix.
10. There were no further updates from Committees.

Corporate Risk Register

11. The Governance Manager presented the latest Corporate Risk Register to the Committee.
12. Confidential information contained in paragraph 9 of the classified appendix.
13. The Committee were content with the top ten risks on the register.

Management Accounts

14. The Management Accounts were presented to the Committee.
15. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 10-11 of the classified appendix.
16. The Committee was content with the accounts. However, a discussion took place on ways in which the Management Account report could be improved. It was suggested that at the next FRC meeting, the Committee could discuss amendments to the presentation of the accounts.

Action: Add agenda item for next FRC Meeting on Management Account report structure.

Budget 2023

17. The 2023 Budget was presented to the Committee for consideration.
18. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 12-18 of the classified appendix.
19. The Committee was content to consider and recommend the 2023 budget to RCVS Council.

Staff Salaries Paper

20. The People Director presented a paper to the Committee on proposed plans to support RCVS staff in light of the cost-of-living crisis; with further budget plans for 2023 pay increases.
21. It was noted that low salaries were not always a key reason for staff leaving the RCVS. However, there were concerns across many sectors that staff may leave organisations for increased salaries to combat any financial deficit because of the crisis.
22. Therefore, it was proposed that to support staff with the increasing cost of fuel prices, a one-off payment of £500 (subject to the usual tax and NI deductions) was to be made to staff in October 2022. This payment will be prorated for part-time staff.
23. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 19-21 of the classified appendix.

iMIS upgrade

24. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 22-25 of the classified appendix.

Any other business

25. There was no other business to discuss.

Date of Next Meeting

26. The date of the next meeting will be Thursday, 17 November 2022 at 14:00 pm, online.

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Registration Committee Minutes - 11 May 2022
Summary	Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 11 May 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Confidential Appendix
Author	Alan Quinn-Byrne Governance Officer/Secretary a.quinn-byrne@rcvs.org.uk 020 7227 3505

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified Appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

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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



Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting held online via Microsoft Teams on 11 May 2022

Members:

Dr M A Donald	Chair
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Ms L Ford	
Dr M O Green	
Professor C J Proudman	
Dr K A Richards	President
*Dr N C Smith	

In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations
Mr A Quinn Byrne	Secretary to ARC / Governance Officer
Mr R Hewes	Head of Insight & Engagement

*Not in attendance – apologies received

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dr Smith.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of Previous meeting

3. Minutes of meeting held on 9 February 2022, were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Registrations Statistics Report

4. The Head of Insight and Engagement presented the Committee with the Registration Statistics report. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with key trends across the registration data for Veterinary surgeons, nurses and practice premises. This was the third report the committee has seen sight of to date and the focus of this report was veterinary surgeons renewal period, using the comparative data from Q1 2022 to the previous four quarters of 2021.
5. Further confidential information is contained in paragraphs 1-4 of classified appendix.
6. The Committee praised the work gone into the report. It was requested that going forward the Committee would prefer to see some graphs on the data being presented to observe the trends more clearly.
7. The Committee also requested whether it would be possible to correlate the data that the RCVS collects on CPD audit compliance and voluntary removals within this data. It was confirmed that data on voluntary removal or reasons why individuals leave the register is available and further discussions can be had on what further information can be brought to the Committee.

Temporary Registration Application

8. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 5-8 of the classified appendix.

Any other business (AOB)

9. Confidential information is contained in paragraphs 9-13 of classified appendix.

Date of Next Meeting

10. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14 September 2022.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 9 May 2022, at 10am.</p> <p>In particular, the Committee is to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approval of new guidance on routine veterinary practice and clinical veterinary research (paragraphs 6-9). • The discussion and subsequent recommendation of an exemption order for lay persons to perform intravaginal artificial insemination in canines (paragraphs 11-15). • The PSS updates in relation to environmental and social sustainability (paragraphs 16-21). <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-13 in the classified appendix, and paragraphs 1-2 in the secure docs appendix.</p>
Decisions required	None
Attachments	<p>Classified appendix 1</p> <p>Classified appendix 2 (Secure docs version)</p>
Author	<p>Beth Jinks</p> <p>Standards and Advice Lead</p> <p>b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Classified appendix 1	Confidential	1, 2, 3
Classified appendix 2 (Secure docs version)	Confidential	1, 2, 3

1 Classifications 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.

2 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 Regulation

Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 9 May 2022, at 10 am

Members:	M A Donald	Chair
	L Allum	
	B Andrews-Jones	
	L Belton	Vice Chair
	M Castle	
	D Chambers	
	M Gardiner	
	C-L McLaughlan	
	T Parkin	
	C Roberts	
In attendance:	E C Ferguson	Registrar
	M Greene	Senior Vice President
	L Lockett	CEO
	G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	S Bruce-Smith	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	K Richardson	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	V Kwok	Standards and Advice Officer
	AI 2(a) only:	
	A Day	Policy Lead, Defra
	C Balaban	Defra
	K Patel	Head of Veterinary Trade Facilitation, Defra
	AI 2(c) only:	
	D Morton	Chair, RCVS Ethics Review Panel
	AI 2(e) only:	
	L Clegg	PSS Lead
	S Iddon	Head of Legal Services (PSS)
	R Hillson	Centre for Sustainable Healthcare
	I Steinbach	Centre for Sustainable Healthcare

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed the Senior Vice President and CEO to the meeting as observers.
2. Apologies were received from D Chambers.

AI 1 Minutes of the meetings held on 7 Feb 2022 and 31 March 2022

3. It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meetings are accurate.
4. It was reported that every action item has either been actioned or appears on the agenda for this meeting.

Matters for decision

AI 2(a) Remote certification – confidential

5. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix, paragraphs 1-4.

AI 2(b) RVP

[This item was initially classified as confidential, but has been reclassified following the meeting]

6. The Committee was reminded that the RVP Working Group was formed in 2019 on instruction of the Standards Committee in order to address the confusion that exists around veterinary research and recognised veterinary practice. Subsequently a sub/Small Group of the WG was formed and delegated the following tasks: 1) amend guidance within Chapter 25 of the Supporting Guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct to provide further information on RVP; and 2) create a framework of how to make decisions about RVP in practice/at an organisational level.
7. The completed drafts of Chapter 25, plus the framework in the form of FAQs, were presented to the Committee.
8. The Committee approved the drafts for publications subject to the following changes:
 - a) The paragraph on blood transfusions requires more context to enable proper flow of the guidance.
 - b) Additionally, the word “cat” should be removed from the paragraph on blood transfusions.

Action: Standards and Advice Lead

9. The Committee felt that the new guidance should be adequately publicised to ensure veterinary surgeons were aware of the changes such as the need for ethics review. It was therefore suggested that publicity should go further than the usual channels, and could, for example include the veterinary academic journals and vet press.

Action: Standards and Advice Lead

AI 2(c) Clinical Case Reviews – Confidential

10. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix, paragraphs 5-13.

AI 2(d) Canine AI

[This item was initially classified as confidential, but has been reclassified following the meeting]

11. The Committee were reminded that the RCVS' historical position has been that intravaginal artificial insemination (AI) in bitches was not an act of veterinary surgery, meaning that lay people may carry out this procedure without the involvement of a veterinary surgeon.
12. The Standards Committee has previously decided that this procedure was an act of veterinary surgery albeit a minor one that would be suitable for an exemption order. In 2019, RCVS recommended to Defra that an exemption order for this procedure should be made but indicated that, in the meantime, the RCVS would maintain the status quo in terms of the advice it gave as regards lay people carrying out the procedure.
13. Three years has passed since that recommendation was made and, as yet, no exemption order has been made. The Committee recognised this position could not continue indefinitely and that currently, there is no indication of when this situation may resolve itself. The Committee was therefore asked to look at matters afresh in terms of whether this procedure is t an act of veterinary surgery, and if it is, whether the College should renew its recommendation to Defra that an exemption order should be made.
14. The Committee discussed the following:
 - a) It was agreed that intravaginal AI is an act of veterinary surgery and confirmed this was on the basis that the procedure was invasive and had some potential to cause harm, for example risk of tearing the vaginal wall, if not done properly.
 - b) Although it is an act of veterinary surgery, it is a minor one with a relatively low risk of harm. It was noted that the RCVS is not aware of any widespread issues caused by lay people being able to carry out this procedure.
 - c) No new information had been presented to suggest that the procedure was not suitable for an exemption order.
15. The Committee therefore agreed that the recommendation to Defra for an exemption order should be renewed and that the status quo should continue to be maintained in the meantime. It was further agreed that the Committee would continue to keep this issue under review and that any updates from Defra should be reported back.

Action: Head of Legal Services (Standards)

[AI 2\(e\) PSS updates](#)

[This item was initially classified as confidential, but has been reclassified following the meeting]

L Clegg, S Iddon, R Hillson, and I Steinbach joined the meeting

Part A: environmental sustainability requirements

16. The Committee was provided with a summary of the environmental sustainability framework, and it was explained that this new guidance will provide tools and structure to make sustainable change within practices, including in working for the reduction of carbon emission from estates and clinical practices.

17. The following discussion was had:

- a. The salary sacrifice scheme (award requirement) should be applicable for equine not just small animals.
- b. Related to the GP anaesthetic requirement (the practice demonstrates that they employ techniques to minimise anaesthetic gas usage): a comment was made around low flow anaesthesia not currently included in Veterinary Nurse training as standard.
- c. A comment was discussed around setting an annual energy target, but it was felt that each practice will be at different stages of their sustainability journey, so this is not achievable as part of the overall standard.
- d. It was explained that although there is no uniform model that is used to measure a carbon footprint, practices will be provided with a methodology which is similar to the NHS in order to make their calculations. Practices will then be able to benchmark themselves. The Committee was assured that guidance will be provided to ensure consistency between groups of the same veterinary surgery, more so than comparing between different surgeries. There are also plans for a veterinary practice-specific methodology to be developed.
- e. With regards to endoparasitocides and ectoparasitocides, although responsible use is supported, it was agreed that practices need to be careful not to discourage clients from obtaining these from veterinary practice and instead should educate clients about the use of parasitocides.
- f. It was highlighted that although it is unusual to be adding in new Core requirements in-between major reviews of PSS, this is being done now because sustainability is an important consideration. It was acknowledged that practices are already under a lot of pressure due to workforce issues, however, these new requirements will have a longer lead time for implementation for this reason.

18. The Committee approved the implementation of the environmental sustainability framework with a 6–12-month lead time with advance notice to the profession of the requirements, and agreed that the supporting guidance should be updated to reflect the changes.

Action: Standards and Advice Lead

Action: PSS Lead

Part B: social sustainability requirements

19. The Committee were provided with social sustainability requirements which have been proposed by the Environment and Sustainability Working Party with input from the RCVS Leadership and Inclusion Manager

20. The Committee approved the implementation of the social sustainability requirements with a three-month lead time and agreed that the supporting guidance should be updated to reflect the changes.

Action: Standards and Advice Lead

Action: PSS Lead

Part C: summary of the changes

21. The Committee approved the proposed changes.

Action: PSS Lead

L Clegg, S Iddon, R Hillson, and I Steinbach left the meeting

[AI 2\(f\) UCOOH – Confidential](#)

22. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraphs 1 and 2.

[AI 3\(a\) DC report](#)

23. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[AI 3\(b\) PSS report](#)

24. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[AI 3\(c\) Riding Establishments Subcommittee report](#)

25. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[AI 4\(a\) RVP Subcommittee report – Confidential](#)

26. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[AI 4\(b\) ERP report – Confidential](#)

27. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[AI 4\(c\) Certification subcommittee report – Confidential](#)

28. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[Risk and equality](#)

29. To be addressed at the additional Standards Committee meeting 19 May 2022

[Date of next meeting](#)

30. The date of the next meeting is 19 May 2022

Table of actions

Paragraph(s)	Action	Assigned to
8	Make suggested amendments to RVP guidance	Standards and Advice Lead
9	Work with Comms to publicise new RVP guidance.	Standards and Advice Lead
16	Re-open discussion with Defra about exemption orders	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
18/20/21	Make agreed amendments to the PSS guidance	PSS Lead
18	Proposed supporting guidance amendments in line with the environmental sustainability framework	Standards and Advice Lead
20	Proposed supporting guidance amendments in line with the social sustainability guidance	Standards and Advice Lead

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on Monday, 19 May 2022, at 3pm</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-18 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decision required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix (secure docs version)
Author	<p>Ky Richardson</p> <p>Senior Standards and Advice Officer/Solicitor</p> <p>k.richardson@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix (secure docs version)	Confidential	1, 2, 3

1 Classifications explained	
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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 Regulation

Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on Thursday, 19 May 2022, at 3pm

Members:	M A Donald	Chair
	L Allum	
	B Andrews-Jones	
	L Belton	Vice Chair
	M Castle	
	D Chambers	
	M Gardiner	
	C-L McLaughlan	
	T Parkin	
	C Roberts	

In attendance:	E C Ferguson	Registrar
	L Lockett	CEO
	G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	S Bruce-Smith	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	K Richardson	Senior Standards and Advice Officer/Solicitor
	I Holloway	Director of Communications

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. Apologies were received from C Roberts, T Parkin, and M Greene.
2. There were no new declarations of interest.

AI 2 'Under care' consultation – confidential

3. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraphs 1-5.

AI 2(a) UCOOH – confidential

4. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraphs 6-15.

AI 3(a) DC report

5. The report was noted.

AI 3(b) PSS report

6. The report was noted.

AI 3(c) Riding Establishments Subcommittee report

7. The report was noted.

AI 4(a) RVP Subcommittee report – Confidential

8. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraph 16.

AI 4(b) ERP report – Confidential

9. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraph 17.

AI 4(c) Certification subcommittee report – Confidential

10. The discussion of this agenda item can be found in the classified appendix (secure docs version), paragraph 18.

Risk and equality

11. The report was noted.

AI 5 AOB

12. The Committee was reminded to share their comments in relation to the final changes to Chapter 23 of the supporting guidance in relation to endorsements or indicate if they would like further time to consider them.

AI 6 Date of next meeting

13. The date of the next meeting is 12 September 2022.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on 16 June 2022, at 4:30pm</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-8 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decision required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix (secure docs version)
Author	<p>Beth Jinks</p> <p>Standards and Advice Lead</p> <p>b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix (secure docs version)	Confidential	1, 2, 3

1 Classifications explained	
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Minutes of the Standards Committee held remotely on 16 June 2022

Members:	M A Donald	Chair
	L Allum	
	B Andrews-Jones	
	L Belton	Vice Chair
	M Castle	
	D Chambers	
	M Gardiner	
	C-L McLaughlan	
	T Parkin	
	C Roberts	

In attendance:	E C Ferguson	Registrar
	L Lockett	CEO
	G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	V Price	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	K Richardson	Senior Standards and Advice Officer/Solicitor
	M Akwah	Standards and Advice Officer
	I Holloway	Director of Communications

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. Apologies were received from C McLaughlan and M Greene.
2. There were no new declarations of interest.
3. The Chair thanked M Greene for being Council observer for the 2021/2022 term, and thanked the Standards and Advice team for all of their work.

AI 2 'Under care' consultation – confidential

4. Please see paragraphs 1-8 of the confidential appendix.

AI 6 Date of next meeting

5. The date of the next meeting is 12 September 2022.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Standards Committee Minutes
Summary	<p>Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on 4 August 2022, at 16:00</p> <p>The Committee's attention is drawn to paragraphs 1-7 in the classified appendix.</p>
Decision required	None
Attachments	Classified appendix
Author	<p>Beth Jinks</p> <p>Standards and Advice Lead</p> <p>b.jinks@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Minutes	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix (secure docs version)	Confidential	1, 2, 3

1 Classifications explained

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2 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 Regulation

Minutes of Standards Committee held remotely on 4 August 2022, at 16:00

Members:	L Allum	
	B Andrews-Jones	
	L Belton	Chair
	M Castle	
	D Chambers	
	O Cook	
	M Gardiner	
	C-L McLaughlan	
	W Wilkinson	
	C Roberts	
In attendance:	E C Ferguson	Registrar
	M Donald	RCVS Council Observer
	G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards)
	B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead
	V Price	Senior Standards and Advice Officer
	I Holloway	Director of Communications

AI 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

1. Apologies were received from C Roberts
2. There were no new declarations of interest.

AI 2 'Under care' consultation – confidential

3. The minutes of this agenda item can be found in the confidential annex paragraphs 1-7.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	14 September 2022 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 14 September 2022
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix (confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4

¹Classifications explained

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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
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Veterinary Nurses Council

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN on Wednesday, 14 September 2022 at 10:30 am

Members:

Mr M E Rendle (Chair)	
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones (Vice-Chair)	Mrs D L Lewis*
Miss J L Beckett^	Dr S Paterson^
Miss A Carr	Dr K A Richards
Mr D J Dyer	Ms S Richardson
Ms S L Fox	Mrs C Roberts^
Mrs S D Howarth	Miss H R Witchell*
Mrs K E Kissick*	

*Denotes absent

^Denotes remote

In attendance:

Miss N Bance	Registration Administrator
Mr L Bishop^	Media and Publications Manager (open session only)
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer / Officer Team Observer
Ms J Delaloye^	Head of Finance (agenda item 16 only)
Mrs J Dugmore^	Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN)
Ms E C Ferguson^	Registrar
Miss S Gibbens	VN Qualifications Manager
Mrs V Hedges	VN Examinations Manager
Mr R Hewes	Head of Insight and Engagement
Ms C McCann^	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Ms J MacDonald^	VN Futures Project Lead (open session only)
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Ms J Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education (open session only)

Chair's introduction and welcome to new member

1. The Chair welcomed members and guests and outlined the order of the meeting.
2. Miss Beckett was welcomed to her first meeting of Veterinary Nurses Council. Miss Witchell would be welcomed at a future meeting.

Apologies for absence

3. Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Kissick, Mrs Lewis, Ms Lockett (CEO), and Miss Witchell.

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest to report.

Obituaries

5. There had been no written obituaries received. Council stood for a minute silence for Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II, patron of the College, who had died on 8 September 2022, and for colleagues and all members of the professions who had passed since it last met.
6. It was noted that the President, Dr Donald, would attend the funeral of Her Majesty and represent the veterinary professions.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2022

7. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix. There were no further comments.
8. The unclassified minutes and classified appendix were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising

9. There were no matters arising to report.

CEO update

10. It was noted that the update provided a much broader picture of the work the College was undertaking, and the CEO was praised for her hard work.
11. There were no comments, and the update was noted.

Matters for decision by VN Council and reports from committees (unclassified items)

VN Education Committee (VNEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022

12. The Chair of VNEC outlined the paper and highlighted:

- pre-accreditation support: one of two visits had been undertaken and the feedback was really positive for the support visits undertaken by the Qualifications Manager and Director of VN (DoVN) for the different centres. The Education Quality Improvement Manager was collating feedback and that was going well; it was hoped that the support visits would have a positive impact;
- action plan monitoring: following accreditations, quality monitoring activities and more general monitoring of quality assurance were discussed, in particular the Pre-Registration Examination Board, which required a new member and a Chair;
- post-registration qualifications: the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) reported an increased number of students on their new certificates, which was positive, and contingencies had been put in place to support the additional numbers.

13. The Chair was pleased to note the continuing momentum for the post-registration courses; it was a credit to VNEC.

Meeting held on 16 June 2022

14. The Chair of VNEC outlined the paper and highlighted:

- applications to Register: the College was continuing to monitor the number of students submitting their completed applications that had less than the required 1,800 hours; numbers were not increasing;
- VetSkill accreditation status: they were previously given conditional accreditation; evidence had now been received to address the issues raised in the report, so conditions had been removed and they now had full accreditation;
- Hartpury University (HU): the Committee had agreed to offer full accreditation for a number of Postgraduate Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Nursing for:
 - o Equine Critical Care
 - o Equine Diagnostic Imaging and Rehabilitation
 - o Perioperative Nursing and Patient Safety
 - o Clinical Nursing and Client Support

It was great that HU had developed this 'niche' area;

- University of Central Lancashire: besides its other certificates in dentistry and clinical coaching and mentoring, it received full accreditation for:

- Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Surgical Nursing Care)
- Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Anaesthesia and Analgesia)

This meant there was a real range of certificates available for nurses to choose from.

15. Comments and questions included:

- at paragraph 29 of the paper, it should read Scotland's Rural College, it was not a university yet;
- looking at the equine course at Level 7, was the Council comfortable with the amount of support given to the students coming through from the diploma? It was noted that, those entering the qualification with a Level 3 Diploma would be upskilling via the research skills Level 6 module prior to stepping up to complete at Level 7;
 - if the students were struggling the university would put support in place, to help them with study skills – it was difficult to tell with people coming from different backgrounds who would do well at what level;
- Glasgow's courses were tied to a Master's process, so there was the opportunity to progress; it was a slightly different process to HU that would be good to see how it develops.

16. There were no other comments, and the reports were noted.

Matters for note

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

17. Mrs Roberts introduced the report and highlighted:

- focus remained on supporting members to either engage with the outcomes-based CPD requirement or using the 1CPD app, and how to reach members that still were not using 1CPD; exemptions for people that had not opted to use 1CPD were listed in the paper;
- it had not been possible to agree an outcome, with regards to exemptions, for overseas practitioners and further discussion was needed between Education, and Registration, Committees regarding CPD requirements for overseas users; this would be brought to the next meeting.

18. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Reports from RCVS committees

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

19. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Standards Committee (SC)

20. The Registrar reported that, following the SC meeting earlier in the week, there had been a discussion about updating the Controlled Drugs (CD) guidance, a document that had been on the College website since 2015 that required some general non-controversial amendments. Two points to mention specifically that were included in the guidance were:

- the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Home Office (HO) had brought out changes in terms of destruction of CDs and who could act as an independent witness. The College had written to the VMD and HO expressing its concerns that there was a build up within practices that could potentially be an issue if people were unable to destroy drugs that required it and there were a lot in storage. The changes were that a person could be classed as independent if they worked for the same franchise or corporate group, provided the practices had a different owner and were separate legal entities; that they must not share stock with or provide services other than the destruction of CDs to the practice. However, VMD had also provided an example of out-of-hours providers being in the same building and being allowed to witness CD destruction, which was a contradiction and clarification was being sought before final wording could be agreed and incorporated into the guidance;
- changes to storage requirements for quinalbarbitone and somulose (that contains quinalbarbitone and cinchocaine), which was classed as a Schedule 2 drug but was exempt from 'safe custody' requirements i.e. kept in a locked container. SC approved that it should be locked away in the same manner as other Schedule 2 drugs irrespective of not being classified. This was already a core requirement recommendation under the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and the College would be in touch with the HO to enquire if reclassification was possible, noting that it could take a long time; thus, changes would be made to the supplementary guidance now as a core requirement in PSS and would apply to all practices. Wording was being finalised and information would be uploaded to the website in its amended form.

21. It was noted that it was a positive step to get the guidance amended.

22. There were no comments, and the proposed amendments were noted.

RVN Disciplinary Committee (RVN DC)

23. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Policy and Public Affairs update

24. The Policy and Public Affairs Manager updated Council on recent work. Primary focus had been on legislation work and it was noted that there continued to be encouraging discussions with Defra to prepare for the possibility of new legislation that the profession had needed for a long time. There had been some useful legal advice on the structure of any new legislation, including the split between primary and secondary legislation. One example was that Schedule 3 was currently fixed and restrictive around what veterinary nurses (VNs) could do, and work was being carried out to ascertain how a more flexible provision could be implemented.

25. On the public affairs and lobbying side, the College continued to write to Members of Parliament (MPs) to share its recommendations. An event would be hosted in October at the House of Lords, that would be for parliamentarians to attend and talk to members of the College, its stakeholders, and other allied professionals the College was looking to regulate and who had helped with the media campaign scheduled to launch soon, about the detail around the benefit of new legislation. There would also be an exhibition with artifacts to help demonstrate the differences between what it was like in 1966 and how things were now.
26. It was noted that there was no definite timeline to legislation yet, but the College was speaking informally to EFRACom (Defra's committee of MPs) and was working hard to be ready; it was hoped that a formal presentation to EFRACom would follow.
27. Comments and questions included but were not limited to:
- the cost-of-living crisis would impact the industry as well as other sectors particularly around energy cost increases; when it was coupled with labour costs, labour shortages, animal welfare concerns, etc., people were deeply concerned about being able to pay for medical costs for animals as well as insurance costs. Was the profession likely to see a significant number of animals handed over to vets to euthanase because they were unable to keep them any longer? It could be as significant an issue as Covid had been and discussions with the government needed to reflect those challenges as well as the whole regulation of the sector;
 - following the Workforce Summit in November 2021, a Summary Report had been published and the team was producing an Action Plan as well as having ongoing discussions with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) – new legislation would really help to bring in paraprofessionals to regulate them and allow for effective delegation within the veterinary team as a real way forward;
 - there was still work to be done to educate vets how they could delegate appropriately to VNs that would ease the situation immediately. Some challenges were economic, but the College could focus on the framework for working practices;
 - delegation could be helped by using the 'SUPERB' poster published a few years' ago;
 - the poster was slightly odd in its bias that it felt it was more about *not* delegating – it was not well received amongst VNs. There was confusion about delegation, from both vet and VN perspectives so work could be undertaken to clarify matters;
 - Linnaeus had adapted the poster and created a flow chart of decision-making to get to a point for both vets and VNs so there was confidence in what could, and could not, be delegated; it appeared to be working well. There was, however, an issue with the wording of 'vet-led team' – the vet undertook clinical leadership, but there was the possibility of a VN leading a team or a business, or other people leading a business, and the cross-over could be challenging;

- 'vet-led' was an imperfect term as there were clinical areas where VNs were not making the diagnosis but were driving the direction of travel; used in the right context it was fine but it was a term that could be used slightly sub-optimally;
- there was a suggestion in the consultation paper to use 'veterinary team' but it was important to preserve diagnosis for vets and for an animal to be under the vet's care regardless of who was taking the lead at 'front end' delivery. BVA and the representative bodies felt very strongly about the 'vet-led team' model and the terminology behind it; it was not likely that the term would be included in the legislation;
- was there a conflict between additional delegation and wanting to do more and the pay issue / cost-of-living impact?
 - not so much of a 'conflict' because it made the job more interesting, but it would be nice if it came with remuneration;
 - it was hoped that VNs would be able to do more including procedures that were not included in the Day One Competences (D1C) or Day One Skills (D1S) that could be mapped to becoming an Advanced Practitioner so there could be a career path linked to pay increases and help with retention;
- it was easier to recruit VNs than it was vets at the moment and there were ongoing discussions country-wide around using an experienced VN in a surgery situation much like medical advanced practitioner nurses to help run a Doctor's GP practice; that was also an opportunity for development;
- it was not so much asking VNs to do more, but rather to do different things that were of higher value that they could take off the vets, to free up the vet to do the things that only they could do;
 - VNs were getting better at having awkward conversations around salaries and work packages – it was about being treated well and being understood;
- a recent pilot was run by Linnaeus where every nursing task was itemised per patient that had considerable push-back from vet teams in terms of how that would be perceived by the clients and whether any concerns would be raised, but in fact there had not been a single query from clients because of the approach taken from informed consent at the time of admission;
 - there could be an empowerment piece that could be undertaken with both VNs and vets; to manage expectations of who would be the best person to undertake a specific role or task to enable clients to see someone more quickly;
- the VN profession was good at being ahead of the curve and it was VNC's responsibility to react in a timely way if there was anything it could do to help going forwards;

- was the College engaging with opposition parliamentarians as well as it was unknown what would happen with the government in the future? It would be unfortunate to have legislation lost in any transition;
 - o yes, discussions were ongoing, and the College would be prepared should there be a leadership change.

28. The Chair brought the discussion to a close and thanked the Policy and Public Affairs Manager for a useful discussion.

VN Futures report

29. The VN Futures (VNF) Project Lead introduced the report and highlighted:

- if anyone had not seen the VNF Interim Report, please see: <https://www.vnfutures.org.uk/resource-items/vn-futures-interim-report-2021/> . The report pulled together the work undertaken over the past five years;
- an animated video clip to depict the work of VNF over the coming months / years was to be produced;
- VNF School Ambassador's Scheme; there was approximately 245 VNs and second-year Student VNs (SVNs) signed up to the Scheme (with more to process), which was really positive. Consideration was being given how to pull the VNs together to create a network to provide support in what was intended to be a very autonomous role; there was a forthcoming meeting with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning, who also had some suggestions going forwards.

30. The Chair also highlighted that VNF would be doing some sessions at British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress in October and that thought was being given to create some metrics for the Ambassadors to measure what success looked like; what worked; what did not work; what resourcing was required, etc. STEM was a good starting point and consideration was to be given to linking up with others to provide support, alongside career people in colleges and universities.

31. There were no comments, and the report was noted.

Communications report

32. The Media and Publications Manager updated Council, highlighting:

- Events Team was busy preparing for BVNA Congress: as well as the VN Futures, the RCVS Academy would be promoted as well as the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) and 1CPD app;
- thank you from the Events Team to all who had participated in the recent VN Days in Manchester and Oxford, and the Jubilee evening at the Museum of Natural History; feedback was that they had been successful events and had been very well received;

- RCVS Academy had recently published its VN Clinical Supervisor Training Course; it was an impressive and interactive course designed to complement and add value to the personal training undertaken through their institutions;
 - a training collaboration would shortly be announced between Mind Matters (MMI) and VNF around the topic of civility, following on from the SVN survey in 2020 which had found bullying and incivility was a big issue not only for SVNs but for VNs in general;
 - the courses mentioned would consider how to promote stability and psychological safety in the workplace; how to improve workplace culture and professional respect; and, overall, the way that colleagues communicated with each other, all of which should be interesting and have a number of people signing up to do them;
 - there were some student-based events coming up: the Chair was doing introductions to the College talks at two universities – the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London, and at Bristol University Veterinary School, and there were plans for online sessions too; these would be available to any SVN and would be dependent on them signing up to the event;
 - work was ongoing relating to navigating difficult circumstances found early on in practice; aimed equally at vets and VNs it was hoped to be launched on the RCVS Academy platform early 2023;
 - the Under Care consultation had been extended slightly to cover the period of National mourning following the death of Her Majesty the Queen; the deadline was now **5:00 pm on Monday, 26 September 2022**. The public survey would be out shortly on the YouGov.co.uk website;
 - Abi Hanson was transferring from the Mind Matters Team to join the Communications Team as Media and Publications Officer full time from early October – there would be a phased transition over the next couple of weeks.
33. A progress update was requested on the VN Leaver Survey (in the CEO report). It was noted that more work was being undertaken to find out why people were leaving the profession; the Policy and Public Affairs Team was putting together an exit survey as part of the workforce action plan – so far it had only been geared toward vets, but VNs would be included at the beginning of the next cycle to feed into the workforce model the College was trying to produce. Data would be included from its Register; from surveys like the VN Leaver Survey; from the Survey of the Profession, etc., to build up a picture of why people left; what would make them stay; what would happen in the future; so that a really flexible picture could be built.
34. The Chair reiterated how enjoyable the VN Days and Jubilee celebration had been and to take the VNs through their declaration; it was noticeable that there were still few male VNs but there was a lot of diversity, which was welcomed. It was hoped to record the introduction to the College and make it available to different educational backgrounds. Further, at the Regional Question Time (RQT) held the previous Wednesday evening, there were some conversations that had provided a feel for what people thought about VNs.

35. Thanks were given to the Media and Publications Manager and the wider Communications Team, and the updated was noted.

Any other business (unclassified items)

Import of rescue dogs

36. An update was provided on the import of rescue dogs and a new working group was being set up to develop a framework to help the import process. VNC would be kept updated of developments.

Date of next meeting

37. The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday, 16 November 2022. As it was a remote meeting it would commence at 10:00 am.

Confidential and private items (closed session)

Draft budget 2023

38. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 14.

VN Education Committee (confidential items)

Meeting held on 16 June 2022

39. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 15 – 22.

Meeting held on 9 August 2022

40. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 23 – 32.

Risk Register

41. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 33 – 37.

Items for RCVS committees

42. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 38.

Any other business (confidential items)

43. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 39 – 43.

44. The Chair drew the meeting to a close.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	Thursday, 10 November 2022
Title	September 2022 PIC / DC Liaison Committee minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 22 September 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Hannah Alderton Committee Liaison Officer h.alderton@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7856 1033

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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²Classification rationales

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Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee

Minutes of the remote meeting held by MS Teams on Thursday, 22 September 2022 at 10:00 am

Members:

Dr K A Richards (Chair)	Senior Vice-President
Dr L Belton	Chair, Standards Committee
Dr N T Connell	Treasurer
Mrs O Cook	Council member
*Mrs S K Edwards	Chair, RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)
Dr B P Viner	Chair, Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Mrs J Way	Chair, Disciplinary Committee (DC)
Mr W Wilkinson	Council member
Ms J S M Worthington	Council member

In attendance:

Miss H Alderton	Committee Liaison Officer
Ms G Crossley	Head of Professional Conduct (HoPC)
Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
*Ms Y Yusuph	DC Clerk

*Denotes absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Edwards.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest to record.

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 19 May 2022

3. It was questioned where the report in relation to the diversity of each of the members of the statutory committees was as discussed in the previous minutes. It was confirmed that this would be brought to the committee in February as part of the annual review of the members attending DCs.
4. Paragraph 7 of the minutes was highlighted, and it was asked what could and had been done to deal with aggression towards the RCVS staff. The website now has an official policy, which staff members could point people towards if they felt it necessary. The College would not refuse to deal with people but would insist on dealing with people exclusively 'on paper' if any aggression continued. It was emphasised that the current biggest problem that staff were having to deal with was individuals not liking the way that their complaint had been handled and not accepting that the RCVS would not be taking the issue to the disciplinary stage.
5. The Chair went through each of the action points from the minutes and an update was given on each, this included but was not limited to:
 - the VCMS annual report would not be available until next year as there had been a confusion previously with dates;
 - there were ongoing discussions with Defra in relation to Schedule 3, particularly around vaccinations;
 - the RCVS Officer team were now meeting with first-year vet students, as well as final-years;
 - recruitment for RVN members of the statutory committees, despite previously being slow, was now going well, 168 people had signed up for the online information event, which was being run for them.
6. The minutes were accepted.

Updates – general

7. The Registrar updated the Committee on the following matters:
 - Statutory Committee training: DC training would be taking place on 21 November, this would be focusing on how dishonesty cases should be looked at from the correct legal perspective as well as consistency in case decisions, while looking at each case on its own merits. PIC training would be taking place the following day, this would be setting in place the changes to stage 1 PIC ready for October;
 - Vet School lectures: the Registrar would be holding a case study lecture at Glasgow University;

- Appeals: both appeals of DC decisions that the Committee had previously been informed about had officially been withdrawn. The RCVS was chasing costs for one of the cases and for the other, it had been agreed that each side would cover their own costs. The Judicial Review of one of the PIC cases had also been thrown out and full costs had been awarded;
- Right to be forgotten: as discussed at previous meetings what information about DC hearings should be on the website was being discussed, along with whether the regular press releases that were sent out should continue;

8. The Committee had no comments or questions, and the Registrar was thanked.

Monitoring / performance / working methods / outcomes / dashboard / KPIs

9. Staffing in the department had remained at good levels and the main reason for this was that there was now a fully trained cohort of case managers who were able to each take on a full case-load. Stage 2 delays were mainly out of the control of the RCVS.

10. Questions and comments included but were not limited to:

- The team was congratulated for reaching the high bar set by the KPIs in so many cases;
- The positive numbers should be reported to the profession to show that improvements were being made;
- It was questioned whether the number of case managers should be increased again to allow for potential fluctuations in staff in the future (as had occurred in the past) so that there would be something of a 'cushion' to minimise impact on performance ; other members of the committee supported this idea;
- Complaining to the RCVS was often much easier than making a complaint at practice level. The recently-launched Academy course on dealing with complaints was highlighted as something that would hopefully aid practices in dealing with complaints and result in fewer people feeling they needed to contact the RCVS;

11. The Committee thanked the Professional Conduct team for their continued hard work.

PIC Audit

12. The report was outlined to the Committee and the fact that this was in relation to cases that had concluded in 2020 was highlighted, so a few of the points had already been addressed. A more structured approach to decision making was now taking place so that it was clearer in both the meeting and the letters written after what the decision was and how the Committee had reached it. Further training had taken place, including case studies, and a number of letter templates had been made to ensure consistency.

13. The difference between the 'arguable case' test and the 'realistic prospect' test was explained to the Committee and the confusion that this had previously caused to both respondents and complainants. It was confirmed that the new process would not include the arguable case test.

14. It was asked if the flowchart outlining the sequence for the new PIC process could be circulated to the Committee again at the next meeting.

ACTION: HPC

15. It was asked if there was any way that all of the changes to the PIC process could be better communicated to the profession so that they understood that positive changes were to take place and so that there was a basic understanding of the process. It was commented that a vet going through the process would not be able to process the information well as they were often highly stressed and worried. It was explained that this would happen but that the issue was often encouraging the profession to read the communication.

Disciplinary Committee report

16. There were no questions. The report was noted.

Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) feedback

17. It was confirmed that the VCMS contract would be coming up next year.
18. The Registrar reported that numbers of enquiries had remained pretty stable and that stage A, where individuals were told to contact the practice, remained the highest percentage.
19. It was asked what the new section of the pie-chart labelled 'products' related to. It was confirmed that this would be investigated and communicated at the next meeting.

ACTION: REGISTRAR

FRC Member Appointment

20. The Registrar explained that the Committee needed to send a representative to sit on the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC). The rules excluded non-Council members from taking this role. The Committee members had been asked if any of them wished to volunteer. The Committee all agreed that they were happy for Dr K Richards to be the representative.

Feedback to Standards Committee v.v. PIC / DC Liaison Committee

21. The opportunity of using the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) to improve the handling of complaints in practices was raised. It was agreed that this would be fed back to the PSS Group.

Any other business

22. The Committee had no other business to discuss.

Risk Register, equality and diversity

23. The Committee had nothing to raise.

Date of next meeting

24. The date of the next meeting would be Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 10:00 am. It was agreed that the meetings continue to be virtual.

25. The Chair brought the meeting to a close.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
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		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications explained

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Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council November 2022

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee in June, July, August, September and October 2022 (31 October 2022 being the date of writing the report).
2. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 30 May 2022), there have been 10 Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings.

New cases considered by the PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the Committee at the 10 meetings referred to above is 44. Of the 44 new cases considered:
 - 22 were concluded at first consideration by the Committee. Of these:
 - 10 cases were closed with no further action, and
 - 9 cases were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
 - 3 cases were held open with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon.
 - 22 were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports.
4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Health or Performance Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

5. The PI Committee is currently investigating 51 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example). This figure does not include cases on the Health and Performance Protocols.

Health Protocol

6. There are two veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Protocol

7. There are no veterinary surgeons 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 30 May to 31 October 2022,

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 1343, and
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 215.

10. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 30 May and 31 October 2022.

Concerns registered between 30 May and 31 October 2022

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Appeal against DC decision	0
- Certification	2
- Client confidentiality	2
- Clinical and client records	2
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	6
- Communication between professional colleagues	1
- Conviction/notifiable occupation notification	2
- CPD compliance	1
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	2
- Euthanasia of animals	6
- Giving evidence for court	0
- Health case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	2
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	0
- Performance case (<i>potential</i>)	0
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	1
- Social media and networking forums	0
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care	171
- Veterinary medicines	5
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0

- Whistle-blowing	2
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	10
- Unassigned	0
Total	215

Data source – Profcon computer system concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

11. In the period 30 May to 31 October 2022, the Committee has referred 3 cases involving 3 veterinary surgeons to the Disciplinary Committee.

Veterinary Investigators

12. The Chief Investigator has undertaken 7 visits since the last report. The first was an unannounced joint visit with the VMD to an animal rescue centre to investigate an alleged breach of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and Veterinary Medicines Regulations. The second was an announced visit to a veterinary practice at the request of the Preliminary Investigation Committee. The third was an announced visit to a witness on a case to discuss potential evidence. The fourth was an unannounced visit to serve disciplinary Committee papers on a Respondent veterinary surgeon who had failed to engage with the College. The fifth was an unannounced visit to serve Notices of Inquiry on two Respondents who had failed to engage with the College. The sixth was an announced visit to assist witnesses giving evidence remotely to the Disciplinary Committee. The seventh was an unannounced visit to a Respondent to hand deliver the Disciplinary Committee decision.

Concerns procedure

13. At Stage 1 of the process, the aim is for the Case Examiner Group to decide 90% of cases within four months of registration of complaint (the Stage 1 KPI). In the five months since the last Report to Council the KPI has been met in 94%, 94%, 84%, 94% and 97% of cases respectively. As explained in previous reports, an expanded team has made a significant difference to the number of cases that can be resolved within the four-month period, and we are really pleased with the progress made.
14. The Stage 2 KPI is now for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months, and on complex cases within 12 months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained.
15. In the period 30 May to 31 October 2022, the PIC reached a decision (to close, hold open or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in 13 out of 23 simple cases.
16. 8 complex cases were decided, of which 2 met the 12-month KPI. In accordance with normal practice, these cases (and KPI's in general) have been reported and discussed in detail at the PIC/DC Liaison Committee meeting.

Operational matters

17. The expanded team of Case Managers has had a marked effect on the progression of matters that can be concluded without significant investigation, and this is reflected in the number of

cases at Stage one that have met the KPI. As ever, we are working hard to progress all the cases that go through the concerns process as swiftly and efficiently as possible.

18. PIC meetings are continuing to alternate between remote and face-to-face, an arrangement that seems to work to the satisfaction of members.
19. Training for members of the department and Committee members, both new and existing, took place on 23 September. This covered the changes to the process, a variety of other legal and procedural discussions, case studies, and updates to the relevant field of law. Further training will take place early next year.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
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 Professional Conduct Officer 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>

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²Classification 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 Regulation

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there have been three meetings of the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee, which took place on 28 June, 9 August and 20 September.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 25 May to 24 October 2022, there were 13 new Concerns relating to RVNs. Of these 13 new Concerns:
 - Two cases were closed at Stage 1 of the concerns process.
 - 10 are currently under investigation by the Case Examiner Group (a veterinary nurse and lay member on RVN PIC and a Case Manager). One case has been registered under the new concerns process and is under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary Surgeon and a lay member (Stage 1 Preliminary Investigation Committee).

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. There have been five new cases considered by the RVN PIC between 25 May and 24 October. Two of these cases were referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken; one case was adjourned for further investigation and two cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee. An ongoing case was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 9 August and was closed with advice issued to the RVN. An ongoing case was also considered by the Committee at its meeting on 20 September and this matter was referred to external solicitors for formal statements to be taken.

Ongoing Investigations

4. One concern is currently under investigation and will be returned to the RVN PIC for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. One RVN is currently 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, two cases have been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

8. A disciplinary hearing in respect of Stephanie Hazelwood took place from Monday 22nd to Tuesday 23rd August 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that the charges amounted to serious professional misconduct and decided to impose a three-month suspension.

9. A disciplinary hearing in respect of Chelsea Strangeway took place from Tuesday 20th to Wednesday 21st September 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that Ms Strangeway's conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to remove her name from the Register.
10. A disciplinary hearing in respect of Katherine Heyes took place from Wednesday 27th to Thursday 28th September 2022. The Disciplinary Committee found that the charge amounted to disgraceful conduct, and it decided to issue Ms Heyes with a reprimand and formal warning as to her future conduct.

Operational matters

11. As of 1 October 2022, a new concerns investigation process was introduced. The CEG stage of the process has been replaced by Stage One Preliminary Investigation Committees which, rather than using the 'arguable case' threshold, will consider from the outset whether there is a realistic prospect that the alleged conduct constitutes serious professional misconduct and that there is sufficient evidence to prove this.
12. Training took place for members of the department and Committee members, both new and existing on 23 September. This covered the changes to the concerns process, as well as other matters and updates to the relevant field of law.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	10 November 2022
Title	Disciplinary Committee Report
Summary	Update of Disciplinary Committee since the last Council meeting on 9 June 2022
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Yemisi Yusuph Disciplinary Committee Clerk Tel: 020 7202 0729 Email: y.yusuph@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
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
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Report of Disciplinary Committee hearings since the last Council meeting on 9 June 2022

Background

1. Since the last update to Council, the Disciplinary Committee ('the Committee') have met on five occasions. The RVN Disciplinary Committee have met on three occasions.
2. The Disciplinary Committee's Annual Training day will take place in person on Monday 21 November 2022 at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Hearings

Daniel Doherty

1. The Disciplinary Committee met for a hearing in person on 4 – 6 April and then again on 24 – 25 May. The charges against the Respondent were in relation to a conviction of Conspiracy to Commit Fraud by False Representation. The offence resulted in a sentence of 24 months imprisonment suspended for 18 months, 150 hours of unpaid work and pay of victim surcharge of £100.
2. The Committee found the facts of the charge proved by a certificate of conviction from the relevant Crown Court.
3. The Respondent submitted that despite the seriousness of the offence, such conviction did not render him unfit to practice veterinary surgery.
4. The Committee took into account many aggravating and mitigating factors, as well as the mitigating factors laid out by HHJ Johnson, including his finding at para 32 that "it was that obsessive commitment to animal welfare that overwhelmed your judgement resulting in you acting dishonestly". However, the Committee had a duty to consider the wider public interest, taking into account the view of the reasonable member of the public who was well informed of all the facts and evidence in the case. Such a person should not expect perfection in a veterinary surgeon, but the Respondent's conduct was liable to have a seriously detrimental effect on the reputation of the profession. The Committee considered that members of the public would rightly be troubled that a veterinary surgeon had committed an offence of this kind. Veterinary surgeons' duties extend beyond the care of animals. Here, individual members of the public who purchased these mis-described puppies were adversely affected. The Respondent's conduct enabled those individuals to be defrauded.
5. The Committee was satisfied that this conduct, fell far below the standard expected of a Registered Veterinary Surgeon and that this conviction was of a nature and seriousness that renders him unfit to practise as a Veterinary Surgeon. To find otherwise would undermine public confidence in the profession and fail to uphold proper standards of conduct and behaviour in veterinary surgeons. Accordingly, it is the judgement of this Committee that the conviction, as set out in the charge, renders the Respondent unfit to practise veterinary surgery.
6. The full decision on finding of facts and sanction can be found here: [Doherty, Daniel May 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts and Unfitness to Practise - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

7. At this stage an application was made by the Respondent's Counsel for the committee to recuse itself from the case. In essence, it was contended that what was stated in paragraph 31 of the Committee's Decision was inaccurate and did not accord with the evidence contained in the documentation that had been placed before the Committee.
8. In the circumstances the Committee did not accept the submission that paragraph 31 is unclear or inaccurate. The Committee considered that when read in context and in its entirety, it is clear and reflects the evidence before the Committee. In regards to the submission about the Appearance of Justice, the Committee considered that, there being nothing inaccurate in the content of paragraph 31, this submission had no foundation or substance.
9. In the circumstances, the Respondent's application was refused.
10. The full decision can be found here: [doherty-daniel-may-2022-decision-of-disciplinary-committee-on-respondent-s-application-for-recusal \(1\).pdf](#)
11. In regard to sanction, the Committee considered that this case was much too serious to be disposed of by way of a reprimand about the Respondent's past conduct or a warning as to his future behaviour. The aggravating factors identified in the Committee's Decision on Facts and Unfitness to Practise confirmed the correctness of this conclusion. The Committee accepted that the Respondent was exploited by his co-conspirators and that his decision to vaccinate the puppies in question did not cause them any harm; indeed it benefited them as puppies. He gained no financial benefit from his decision to vaccinate these puppies – he simply recouped the cost of the vaccines in question. His motivation for vaccinating them was his obsessive commitment to animal welfare. He maintained full and proper records of the vaccinations he had undertaken which assisted the authorities to successfully prosecute his co-conspirators.
12. The Committee accepted that by reason of the time the Respondent served in prison, he has been the subject of a de facto period of suspension from practice and has also undertaken a significant number of hours of Community Service (some 230 hours in all). In these circumstances the Committee concludes that the deterrent factor in a sanction of suspension has been partially met. In the Committees view, the seriousness of the Respondents conduct which resulted in his criminal conviction merited a period of suspension of 9 months. However, the Committee considered that it is right that the period during which the Respondent was unable to practise during his incarceration should be fully reflected and should serve to reduce the period that would otherwise have been the appropriate period of suspension from practice.
13. In the result the decision of the Committee was that, having regard to the unusual and, in some respects unique, features of this case, the ultimate period of suspension should be that of one month.
14. The full decision in regards to sanction can be found here: [doherty-daniel-may-2022-decision-of-disciplinary-committee-on-sanction \(1\).pdf](#)

Warwick Seymour Hamilton

15. On Wednesday 8 June, the Committee met virtually to hear the tenth restoration application from Mr Seymour Hamilton.
16. Seymour-Hamilton was originally removed from the Register after an inspection of his Kent-based veterinary practice deemed it to be in a state that would pose a risk to animal health

and welfare. The inspection found that, amongst other causes for concern, the Controlled Drugs Register was not properly maintained, the operating theatre was unhygienic and presented a risk of infections and there were no adequate facilities to sterilise instruments.

17. In deciding whether Mr Seymour-Hamilton could be restored to the Register, the Committee considered if he had understood why his previous restoration attempts had failed, if he had undertaken adequate training to bring his clinical skills and knowledge up-to-date, and if his conduct since his removal from the Register would restore the public's confidence in his ability to carry out the duties required of a qualified veterinary surgeon.
18. In its determination, the Committee found that that Mr Seymour-Hamilton was not fit to be restored to the Register. The Committee found that he still does not accept the original findings which led to his removal from the Register and, over the course of his previous applications, has shown no insight into the conduct underlying those original findings.”
19. As such, the Committee refused Mr Seymour Hamilton's application. The full decision can be found here: [Seymour-Hamilton, Warwick John June 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on the Application of the Applicant for Restoration to the Register - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

McKinstry, Ruthford & Inman

20. Between 14-20 June, the Committee met in person in respect of the three named Respondents .The charges against Mr McKinstry relate to the fact that in October 2019 he wrote a letter, or arranged for a letter to be written, indicating that Dr Inman, a registered mobility scorer for the health and welfare scheme, had undertaken an assessment when he in fact had done so and that, in doing so, he was dishonest, misleading and risked undermining procedures designed to promote animal welfare. He did this without Dr Inman's knowledge and he himself was not a registered mobility scorer.
21. The charges against Dr Rutherford relate to the fact that in September 2019 on two occasions he similarly wrote a letter saying that Dr Inman had undertaken an assessment when he had done so and had uploaded these letters on to the scheme's online platform and that, in doing so, he was dishonest, misleading and risked undermining the scheme.
22. The charges against Dr Inman were that on two occasions in September 2019 she allowed Dr Rutherford to create and upload these letters knowing that they were dishonest, misleading and risked undermining the scheme.
23. At the outset of the hearing, all three respondents admitted to all the charges against them. The Committee found the charges to be serious misconduct.
24. Full decision on findings of facts and disgraceful conduct can be found here: [McKinstry, Alexander, Rutherford, Andrew, and Inman, Rebecca June 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts and Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
25. After determining that there was disgraceful conduct, the Committee went on to establish what sanction to impose on the respondents. The Committee took into account both aggravating and mitigating factors, when making their determination.
26. Regarding Mr McKinstry, in terms of aggravating factors the Committee considered that the conduct was premeditated, that he had an increased position of trust and responsibility as a

practice director at the time of the misconduct, it was a breach of trust for the farm clients, and he had put Dr Inman's professional reputation in jeopardy by not informing her of his conduct. In mitigation, the Committee considered that there was no harm or risk of harm to animals, the conduct was not done for personal financial gain, that Mr McKinstry had been open and frank in his dealings with the RCVS and had shown insight into his behaviours, and his previous good character and unblemished career.

27. Regarding Dr Rutherford, the aggravating factors were premeditated misconduct, being in a position of trust and responsibility as a practice director, and breach of trust with farm clients. In mitigation the Committee considered no risk of harm, lack of financial gain, open and frank dealings with the RCVS, insight into behaviours and that Dr Rutherford was previously of good character with an unblemished career.
28. Regarding Dr Inman, the aggravating factors were the abuse of her position of trust as a registered mobility scorer and the breach of trust with the farm clients. In mitigation the Committee considered that it had been an isolated incident involving, from Dr Inman's point of view, a single telephone call. It also considered that there was no risk of harm, no personal financial gain, her open and frank admissions in dealings with the RCVS, demonstration of insight, previously unblemished record, and efforts to avoid repeats and remediate past misconduct.
29. "the Committee concluded that a period of suspension was sufficient and proportionate in this case to meet the need to maintain public confidence in the profession and uphold proper standards. It had a sufficient deterrent effect upon others in the profession and was sufficient to mark that the disgraceful conduct was unacceptable,"
30. The Committee concluded that the appropriate sanction to impose on all three respondents was to suspend each of them for one month.
31. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [McKinstry, Alexander, Rutherford, Andrew, and Inman, Rebecca June 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Sanctions - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Stephanie Hazelwood RVN

32. The RVN Disciplinary Committee met virtually on Monday 22 – Tuesday 23 August 2022.
33. The charges against Ms Hazelwood were in relation to taking a number of items from Orwell Veterinary Group without paying as well as ordering and/or taking POM-V medication without payment or a prescription from a veterinary surgeon.
34. The hearing began with an application from the College to proceed in the respondent's absence. This application was accepted as the Committee concluded that it was in the interests of justice that the matter should proceed notwithstanding the absence of Ms Hazelwood. The respondent supplied written submissions for the Committee to consider.
35. The Committee found the charges proved on the basis of Ms Hazelwood's admissions supplied in writing, as supported by the evidence relied on by the College.
36. It was concluded that the Respondents conduct fell far below the standard expected of a register veterinary nurse. The Committee found that her actions would be considered deplorable by other members of the profession and the public at large and amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

37. Regarding sanction the Committee took into account the mitigating factors in this case and that Ms Hazelwood stole these items at a time when she was under particular financial and personal pressure. The amounts involved were small and had been repaid. The Committee concluded that through her written submissions significant insight had been demonstrated and full recognition of the dreadful thing that had been done.
38. It was the Committees view that while the conduct was extremely serious it would have been unduly punitive to direct the Registrar to remove her name from the register. the Committee therefore directed the Registrar to remove her name for a period of three months.
39. The Committees full decision in relation to this matter can be found here: [Hazelwood, Stephanie August 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/decisions/2022/08/hazelwood-stephanie)

Sue Dyson

40. Between Wednesday 31 August and Friday 2 September, the Disciplinary Committee met to hear the Restoration Application of Dr Sue Dyson. Dr Dyson was originally removed from the register following her Disciplinary hearing in July of 2021, in relation to her dishonest actions and statements.
41. In considering Dr Dyson's application for restoration, the Disciplinary Committee considering the application had to take into account a number of factors: her acceptance of the findings of the Committee at the original hearing; the seriousness of the original findings; public protection; risks to animal welfare if she were to be allowed to practise again; the length of time off the Register; her conduct since being removed; her efforts to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice; the impact of the sanction on her; and public support for her.
42. The Committee considering her restoration application found that, while Dr Dyson had demonstrated some insight into her misconduct, had expressed remorse and admitted dishonesty, this was undermined by her continuing denial that she had been knowingly dishonest in her conduct, having attributed her actions to being in a dissociative state at the time.
43. In terms of seriousness, the Committee considered that Dr Dyson's misconduct was at the highest end of the spectrum, having involved being dishonest with multiple people on multiple occasions, and then inventing a fictitious Home Office Inspector to continue the deceit. The Committee also considered that public confidence in the profession and the RCVS as the regulator would be undermined were Dr Dyson to be allowed to be restored to the Register without genuinely accepting full responsibility for her actions.
44. In her favour, the Committee considered that there was no risk to the health and welfare of animals and that she had provided ample evidence of her efforts to keep up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice should she be allowed to practise again. In addition, she had made some progress, for example she was able to show some insight by the steps she had taken to avoid finding herself in such a stressful environment in the future. The Committee also considered the many positive testimonials it received from professional colleagues and clients.
45. The Committee decided to refuse Dr Dyson's application. Judith Way, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "*The Committee considered that public confidence in veterinary surgeons and the profession will not be maintained if a veterinary*

surgeon who has been found to have committed very serious acts of dishonesty refuses to genuinely accept that that is the case.”

46. The Committee full decision can be found here: [Dyson, Sue September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Application for Restoration - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Chelsea Jade Strangeway RVN

47. The RVN Committee met virtually between Tuesday 20 September and Wednesday 21 September, to hear and Inquiry into Miss Strangeway. The Inquiry was in relation charges that alleged she had falsified records and was practising whilst unregistered.
48. The first five charges related to separate occasions in 2020 where Miss Strangeway falsely claimed on hospitalisation records that she had attended the practice where she was employed to monitor hospitalised animals overnight, when she had not in fact done so. In two of the cases Miss Strangeway also recorded on the form that she had provided the prescribed medication.
49. The sixth charge was that between 1 January and 10 February 2020, she had held herself out and practised as a registered veterinary nurse, despite not being on the RCVS Register at the time. The remaining two charges related to the fact that her conduct as described in the previous charges was dishonest, misleading and potentially detrimental to animal welfare.
50. The Committee first went on to establish whether the facts can be proved. After seeing CCTV evidence and hearing Miss Strangeway’s admissions, the Committee found all factual allegations proved.
51. The Committee then went on to establish whether Miss Strangeway’s conduct amount to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee took account of the *Code of Professional Conduct*, with particular reference to the requirements for prioritising animal health and welfare, honesty, accurate clinical records, providing appropriate and adequate veterinary nursing care, and being properly registered.
52. The Committee found that Miss Strangeway’s conduct did amount to serious professional misconduct based on her dishonesty and the fact the conduct was sustained and repeated and created a risk to animal health and welfare.
53. The full decision on facts and disgraceful conduct can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Facts and Disgraceful Conduct in a Professional Respect - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)
54. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Strangeway, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of aggravating factors, the Committee considered that there was a risk of injury to animals, the sustained nature of the misconduct, that there was actual or potential financial gain, that there was an abuse of a position of trust and responsibility, and that she had shown a wilful disregard of the RCVS and the systems regulating the veterinary nursing profession.
55. In mitigation, the Committee considered that there had been no actual harm to animals, that admissions to the allegations had been made at an early stage, that the respondent had displayed both remorse and insight regarding her conduct, including apologising to the

practice, that she was of previously good character, and that she was ordinarily a good veterinary nurse.

56. Ultimately, the Committee decided that Miss Strangeway should be removed from the register. They stated that *"This is a case involving serious dishonesty, sustained over a period of time, and conduct potentially detrimental to animal welfare, as well as willful disregard of professional regulations. Regrettably, the Committee has decided that, in this case, the respondent's misconduct is so serious that removal from the Register is the only means of protecting animals and the wider public interest."*
57. The full decision on sanction can be found here: [Strangeway, Chelsea Jade September 2022 Decision of Disciplinary Committee on Sanction - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk/decisions/2022/09/strangeway-chelsea-jade-september-2022)

Stephen Prichard

58. The Committee met between Tuesday 20 to Thursday 22 September 2022, to consider the Inquiry into Mr Stephen Prichard. The Committee proceeded in his absence after he mainly failed to respond to numerous attempts to contact him about the hearing and engage him in the process including by email, post, telephone and personal service of documents. In its decision to proceed in Mr Prichard's absence the Committee confirmed that it would not hold his non-attendance against him or attach any adverse inference to that fact.
59. The first set of charges against Mr Prichard were that he, on occasions between 1 April 2016 and 29 April 2021, taken quantities of the prescription-only medication and the controlled drug Vetergesic from the practice's stock other than for legitimate veterinary use. And that on 30 April took Vetergesic from the practice by drawing it into a syringe for the purposes of self administration. In doing so, his conduct was dishonest. Another set of charges were that, on five separate occasions between 5 December 2019 and 29 April 2021, Mr Prichard had attended the practice to work as a veterinary surgeon whilst unfit to do so. The final charge related to Mr Prichard's failure to respond adequately or at all to all reasonable requests from the RCVS for his response to concerns raised about his conduct.
60. At the beginning of the hearing Nicole Curtis, acting on behalf of the College, read the written evidence from 11 separate witnesses outlining the facts related to the charges against Mr Prichard, including the record of an investigative meeting held by the practice in which he admitted his theft and use of the controlled drug and following which, he was dismissed from his employment.
61. Having considered the evidence from the witnesses, the Committee then considered whether they found the charges against Mr Prichard proven. All the charges were found proven by the Committee which then went on to consider if the proven charges, individually or in any combination, amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so, the Committee took into account both aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of aggravating factors the Committee found that there was a risk of injury, recklessness, premeditated and sustained misconduct, and that there was an abuse of his professional position in accessing prescription-only controlled drugs for reasons other than legitimate veterinary use. In mitigation, the Committee considered that he had made admissions as part of the practice's internal disciplinary investigation.
62. Overall, the Committee found he had breached aspects of the *Code of Professional Conduct* related to honesty and integrity, making animal health and welfare his priority, appropriate use of veterinary medicines, taking steps to address physical and mental health conditions that could affect fitness to practise, responding to reasonable requests from the

RCVS, and bringing the profession into disrepute. Therefore, the Committee found him guilty of serious professional misconduct in relation to all of the charges.

63. In considering its sanction, the Committee having carefully considered all possible alternative sanctions that were available felt that, considering the seriousness of the misconduct, removal from the Register was the most appropriate decision. Austin Kirwan, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "This is a case involving serious dishonesty, sustained over a period of time, and conduct potentially detrimental to animal welfare, as well as wilful disregard of professional regulations.
64. The full decision can be found here: [Prichard, Stephen September 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Katherine Heyes RVN

65. The Committee Met between Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 September, to hear an Inquiry into Miss Heyes. The Inquiry was in relation to a previous conviction against her, for entering an aircraft when drunk / being drunk in an aircraft. In July 2020, Miss Heyes plead guilty to the charges against her.
66. At the Disciplinary hearing, Miss Heyes was not legally represented, although she was assisted by a friend.
67. At the start of the hearing, Miss Heyes admitted the facts of her 2020 conviction, for which she had been sentenced to a community order consisting of unpaid work for 80 hours and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £80 and £250 in costs, but denied that the conviction rendered her unfit to practise as a veterinary nurse.
68. The Committee found that the facts of the case were proved, on admission by Miss Heyes and on the basis that the certificate of conviction referred to the criminal offence which Miss Heyes had pleaded guilty to.
69. In reaching its decision, the Committee took into account the evidence before it and the advice of the Legal Assessor. The Committee went on to consider whether Miss Heyes conduct amounted to serious professional misconduct. In doing so the Committee noted that the Disciplinary Guidance stated "A conviction may be related to professional or personal behaviour and whether it renders a respondent veterinary surgeon unfit to practise is a matter of judgment for the Disciplinary Committee. Behaviour unconnected with the practice of veterinary surgery can cause concerns about the protection of animals or the wider public interest."
70. The Committee concluded that the conviction and underlying behaviour was sufficiently serious that it required a finding that Miss Heyes was unfit to practise veterinary nursing on public interest grounds and that it also breached Code 6.5 of the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses which states: 'Veterinary nurses must not engage in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession'.
71. Having found serious professional misconduct proven, the Committee went on to consider the most appropriate sanction for Miss Heyes, taking into account the relevant aggravating and mitigating factors. In terms of the aggravating factors, the Committee considered that the nature of the conviction would have caused a risk to passengers, including children and that

Miss Heyes had behaved recklessly, falling far below the standard to be expected of a member of the veterinary nursing profession.

72. In mitigation, the Committee considered this was a single and isolated incident, Ms Heyes had no previous disciplinary findings against her and following her conviction she had shown developing insight. It noted that she had continued to practise as a competent and dedicated veterinary nurse.
73. On deciding to reprimand Miss Heyes in respect of the charge and to warn her as to her future conduct, Cerys Jones, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee decided to reprimand Ms Heyes because of its finding that the charge amounted to disgraceful conduct and rendered Miss Heyes unfit to practise. Such a sanction was necessary in the Committee's view because the conviction brought the profession into disrepute. Whilst the charge was not so serious as to require suspension or removal from the register, the Committee decided it is necessary to issue a formal warning to Ms Heyes as to her future conduct.
74. The full decision can be found here: [Heyes, Katherine September 2022 Decision of the Disciplinary Committee - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Upcoming DC cases

75. The DC currently have 3 hearings listed

- 1 November – 2 November
- 7-11 November & 22-28 November
- 20-24 February 2023

76. There are currently two referred hearings which will be listed shortly.