

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	21 September 2020
Title	(21) September 2020 Council minutes – declassified items
Summary	Declassified minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 21 September 2020
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
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Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Declassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3

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

Council Meeting

DECLASSIFIED Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 21 September 2020

Members:

Dr M O Greene (President in the Chair)	
Dr C J Allen	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Dr S Paterson
Professor D J Argyle*	Mr M L Peaty
Miss L Belton	Mr M E Rendle
Professor D Bray	Dr K A Richards
Mr J M Castle	Dr C L Scudamore
Dr D S Chambers	Dr N C Smith
Dr N T Connell	Dr R S Stephenson*
Professor S Dawson	Dr C W Tufnell*
Dr M A Donald	Mr T J Walker
Dr J M Dyer*	Professor J L N Wood*
Ms L Ford	Ms J S M Worthington
Mr D J Leicester	

*Absent

In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C McCann	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Miss C H Middlemiss	Chief Veterinary Officer (Observer)

President's introduction

1. The President thanked Council for attending the confidential meeting at short notice and outlined the order of the meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Professor D J Argyle

- Dr J M Dyer
- Dr R S Stephenson
- Dr C W Tufnell
- Professor J L N Wood

Declarations of interest

3. There were no new declarations of interest.

Matter for decision by Council and for report (confidential item)

Estates Strategy

4. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 4 - 12.

Notice of Motion

Dr Allen declared an interest: a remote telemedicine provider had provided assistance to RSPCA clients in Putney as the hospital there was closing.

5. There had been one Notice of Motion received:
6. Proposer: Dr N C Smith
Seconder: Mr M L Peaty

'Council recognises the excellent work that has been done by the COVID 19 Taskforce since it was set up in March. However, there are some decisions, particularly those with widespread impact on the profession and those where there have been multiple extensions, that should be considered by Council as a whole. The decision to extend remote prescribing to 15 January needs to be discussed at Council, therefore the current guidance [i.e. that as decided by the Taskforce on 17 September 2020] should only be extended until 31 October 2020. Council will decide on 8 October what the guidance should be and when it should next be reviewed.'

7. Dr Smith stated that at the last Council meeting (3 September 2020) there was some discussion as to whether the Covid-19 Taskforce was still necessary; he was of the view that Council was meeting frequently and had the capacity to discuss matters and make decisions; particularly as some matters made a huge impact on the profession i.e. remote prescribing. Following that meeting, a journalist from the *Veterinary Record* had approached him for comment on the Taskforce, but he had declined to comment as it was to be discussed further at the October Council meeting. He was concerned that in the meantime the decision had then been made by the Taskforce to extend remote prescribing by three months to mid-January – it was the third

extension and should instead be discussed (whether publicly or in private) by Council, and not be a decision made by the Taskforce.

8. The CEO explained the reason behind the Taskforce decision: it was a commitment scheduled for review by the Taskforce by the end of September and was a timing issue, not a deliberate action taken before Council had discussed the Taskforce remit in October. Furthermore, it was highlighted that it was not just the future of the Taskforce that affected the remote prescribing decision coming to Council, it was also the future of use of the Delegation Scheme – under the current Delegation Scheme, remote prescribing fell under the remit of Standards Committee, not Council, unless Council decided otherwise. It should be noted that the Taskforce decision to extend remote prescribing to mid-January had not yet been communicated to the profession; it was being held up until Council had had its meeting [today].
9. Comments and questions included:
 - based on the motion, if Council was in favour what would the implications be? Would you require, for example, a short-notice Standards Committee before the next Council meeting given that the current delegation was currently through that route?
 - o the Taskforce decision had not yet been communicated to the profession, therefore, it was up to Council if the January date specified was amended to end October 2020 or remained for further review on 15 December 2020, effective 15 January 2021;
 - o if members voted against the motion, it would mean the Taskforce decision would stand, with a review date of 15 December 2020, changes communicated to the profession, and in place for mid-January 2021. It should be noted that changes to the flowchart would be communicated to the profession at the same time;
 - o delegation in the longer term would depend on the outcome of the October Council meeting – if the Taskforce responsibilities reverted back to the agreed Delegation Scheme, it was likely that there would need to be an extra Standards Committee meeting at short notice on the single topic of remote prescribing. The motion as it stood was outwith the agreed Delegation Scheme. That said, it was a Council decision whether this item should go through the delegated route to Standards Committee, or instead be discussed by (full) Council itself either at the scheduled meeting on 8 October 2020 or at a later date;
 - o regardless of who made the decisions, it was essential to give the profession notice of the changes;
 - re: the journalist enquiries: had the question of the continuance of the Taskforce been discussed in open session?
 - o yes, it was discussed under the CEO update in open session.

Dr Allen and Professor Bray left the meeting.

10. A vote was taken on the Notice of Motion on the understanding that:

In favour:

Remote prescribing would be taken outwith the agreed Delegation Scheme (i.e. not through Standards Committee) and discussed at the scheduled October Council meeting; any decisions made to be communicated to the profession as soon as possible thereafter with any new guidance commencing after 31 October 2020;

Against:

The Taskforce decision stood, remote prescribing would be further reviewed by 15 December 2020 and changes communicated to the profession as soon as possible with guidance in place for 15 January 2021.

In favour:	9
Against:	9
Abstention:	1

11. As the vote was tied, the President had a further casting vote:

In favour:	10 (9 + casting vote)
Against:	9
Abstention:	1

12. The vote was a majority in favour of Council discussing the matter of remote prescribing at its meeting on 8 October 2020.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

13. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 21.

Date of next meeting

14. The next scheduled Council meeting is Thursday, 8 October 2020 commencing at 10:00 am and reconvening in the afternoon.

15. The meeting was brought to a close.

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