Council election:
vote online, or by post

- Eight candidates standing in this year’s election – see inside for candidate bios and statements.

- Voting closes at 5pm on Friday, 24 April 2020.
Please note: Under the RCVS Election Scheme, as approved by the Privy Council, the RCVS Registrar shall not be required to circulate an election statement which they consider to be defamatory (or otherwise unlawful), or factually misleading and may, when the statement cannot be agreed with the candidate, either edit the election statement or decide not to circulate it.
Your questions answered

This year we put the candidate biographies and manifestos online before the start of the election period to allow the profession more time to get to know each of them and ask them questions accordingly. Thank you to all those veterinary surgeons who submitted a question following our ‘Quiz the candidate’ call.

Following the deadline for questions at the end of February we have asked all candidates to record themselves answering two of the submitted questions of their choice, as well as briefly explaining what they feel sets them apart as a potential member of RCVS Council, in no more than two-and-a-half minutes.

The videos will be published on our website at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetvote20 in March and on the RCVS YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos) and these will be available to view until the voting deadline at 5pm on Friday 24 April 2020.
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Proposers: Dr Lisa Watts, Dr Richard Weston

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
Whilst studying chemistry I was offered a place at Liverpool. Before starting, I had fun working in mining explosives R&D in Johannesburg to save up. Since graduating in 1992 I’ve worked in SA, equine and mixed practices. This has been mainly in the UK but also in Melbourne and Sydney (becoming an Australian dual citizen), later Cape Town. In 2010 I opened a JVP practice in west Oxford, which eventually led to the tribunal and judicial review cases I brought in 2015 (see my manifesto).

I completed a theology degree at London School of Theology in 2004 and am currently studying for a distance MA in Christian Apologetics at Biola University in Los Angeles. This entails assessing the evidence base for a Christian worldview seen through the lenses of history, science, philosophy, ethics etc. Alternative worldviews such as atheism, Islam, secular humanism and various eastern religions are likewise critiqued. A challenging current project is reconciling the biblical account of Adam with DNA evidence emerging from prehistoric man.

Sports include mountain and road cycling, skiing and underwater hockey. I also enjoy travel and mountaineering, last summer climbing several Swiss peaks. Back home in Oxford I read and play the flute.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT
Since 2017 I’ve been standing to promote justice, integrity, accountability, diligence and freedom of speech within the RCVS and the profession.

As in 2017, last year the RCVS heavily censored my manifesto, alleging that it was misleading and defamatory. I violently disagreed and sought to overturn their editing by judicial review. Last March the judge accepted the RCVS’s claim that I’m obliged first to follow their internal procedure, i.e. argue retrospectively that the election was unfair. This I’m doing under protest. The process couldn’t commence until July; decision expected February.

Topics of three other legal disputes have included the adequacy of the investigation of RVN misconduct complaints, internal accountability at the RCVS, stewardship of members funds, taking mental health issues seriously and accurately representing my 100% unblemished professional conduct record since qualifying. The RCVS insist they’re above reproach in all these areas.

The College spent approximately £80k in legal fees defending my judicial review claims in 2015 (in the principle case, I was successful except regarding £12k RCVS costs) and 2019. Judges ruled that I should repay the RCVS approximately £15k (2015) and £7k (2019), almost entirely on procedural grounds. My own legal expenses were minimal as I represented myself.

In 2017 the College spent £35k defending my unsuccessful internal challenge to the fairness of the elections (£14k to date for 2019.) In 2015 I won unfair and wrongful dismissal in an Employment Tribunal case against a large corporate (unrecoverable costs approx. £20k, paid by insurance). Counterintuitively, afterwards they bought my joint venture practice for £60 by compulsory purchase.

This track record demonstrates my solid commitment to seeing a seismic shift in the culture and ethics of both the RCVS and the wider profession. Please vote for me so that I can deliver it more effectively, diplomatically and economically.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Graduated 1987 (Glasgow) with over 25 years first opinion practice in Ayrshire. Developed a traditional (2 vet), mix of farm, horse and companion species practice into a purely small animal (6 vet) with a keen interest in dentistry latterly.

Selected to be clinical coach for the nurse training and spent a period as an RCVS practical OSCE examiner for VN exams.

In 1988 became a partner in a hill beef and sheep farm (until 2003). Currently still farm sheep but on lower, kinder ground!

Appointed as the veterinary non-executive director on the board of the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme 2017 (ongoing).

Past president (2017–19) Scottish Branch BVA, raising profile ensuring BVA Scotland is the ‘go-to’ place for stakeholders. Attend Scotland’s National Rural Mental Health Forum for BVA.

I have just been appointed as a Trustee of the SSPCA.

Currently chair the RCVS Standards committee and the BVA CPD committee.

I am a BVA, BSAVA and VetTrust member.

Outside of work I am still a keen runner, albeit getting slower. Apart from keeping fit it also keeps my head clear. Started up local parkrun from scratch, developed cohesive team made of total strangers, now averaging 142 runners a week.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Thank you for electing me to Council four years ago.

During this time, I have also been involved in Red Tractor Farm Assurance and Scottish Branch of BVA. Together all three have worked incredibly well as there are many communal strands involving animal health and welfare. I was recently elected Standards chair by other members of Council.

We are at such an exciting point in time with the Under Care/Out of Hours Review and I look at this as an enormous opportunity for all of us to help shape the profession into an improved design, ensuring IF there are any changes, they are justified and rational. It is imperative that the review is in a reasonable time frame but speed should not override the methodology to the results as they are so fundamental. I feel it is essential to ensure the Code of Conduct is fit for purpose for those that follow in the future.

I am currently the third chair of Standards Committee in 3 years so if re-elected, it would ensure this review has continuity and strong leadership.

Only three veterinary surgeons get elected each year onto council so your vote is really important. We need a diverse and broad range of individuals and I hope I am representative of many of you: my feet are firmly grounded (usually in wellies, in mud), my positive outlook and my background of first opinion practice. I have been listening and talking to as many vets as I can through my various roles. Importantly, I have the time to fully commit.

We are a small profession that punches well above its weight in terms of influence in many different areas and we should be proud of who we are. With your vote I look forward to continuing my journey on council.
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Proposers: Dr Colin Melbourne, Dr Andrew Stephens

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
• 1972–73 Voluntary Service Overseas, Kenya.
• 1973–74 London School of Economics.
• 1974–81 Employed small animal/mixed/zoo practices.
• 1981–2020 Principal small animal practices.
• 1980s Creeping realization junk pet foods devastate health.
• 1991 Blew whistle on junk pet-food/veterinary alliance: Oral Disease in Cats and Dogs.
• 1992 Presentation to Australian Veterinary Association: Pandemic of Periodontal Disease a Malodorous Condition.
• 1993 Guest speaker Massey University, New Zealand: Pet Foods Insidious Consequences: A modern veterinary SNAFU.
• 1993 Dr Douglas Bryden, Director Sydney University Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science commissioned the article: Preventative Dentistry.
• 1994 Journal of Veterinary Dentistry: Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal Disease in Mammalian Carnivores.
• 1995 JSAP Periodontal disease and leucopenia.
• 1997 Nominated by tutors Oliver Graham-Jones and Arthur Hayward for RCVS Elections.
• 2001 Cricket Media: Poison your pets with multinational offerings.
• 2001 Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health (389 pages).
• 2005 Work Wonders: Feed your dog raw meaty bones (120 pages).
• 2008 Whistleblowers Australia: Blowing the whistle on the pet-food industry/veterinary/fake animal welfare racket.
• 2018 Dr Richard Malik, Sydney University Centre for Veterinary Education, commissioned the article: Raw meaty bones essentials.
• 2018 Submissions and witness to Australian Senate Inquiry on Safety of Pet Foods.
• 2020 Twenty fourth consecutive RCVS Election.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT
Why?
Why are the majority of dogs and cats fed highly processed industrial junk food – each and every day of their lives?

It’s increasingly common knowledge that a processed diet, gum disease and obesity are determinants of inflammation in humans – inflammation triggering a litany of diseases. For dogs and cats it’s arguably much worse.
We know that ripping and tearing at raw meaty bones provides the essential elements, the *sine qua non*, for carnivore good health:

RAW MEATY BONES Medicinal modes of action
1. Feeding frenzy – release of endorphins/immune stimulation — therapeutic
2. Physical exercise – release of endorphins/immune stimulation – therapeutic
3. Tooth cleaning – preventative medicine – therapeutic
4. Stimulate gut enzymes and motility – therapeutic
5. Natural food contains intracellular enzymes, auto-digests and is thus pancreas sparing – therapeutic
6. Probiotics, maintenance of the microbiome – therapeutic
7. Substrate conditioning of the colon environment leading to healthy balance of bacteria – therapeutic
8. Behavioural conditioning (avoidance of stress/neurosis) – therapeutic
9. Natural array of biochemicals – nutrition in the commonly used sense and providing all the essential macro and micro nutrients in the appropriate balance for optimal cellular growth, function and repair

We know that nature got it right. Nature teaches that raw meaty bones are the strongest, safest, most gentle, most effective food and medicine for wild and domestic carnivores. But, perversely, veterinary schools disparage nature’s best medicine and instead promote the alleged benefits of industrial offerings. Huge multi-national corporations pay hush money to veterinary schools and veterinary associations with devastating consequences for pets, pet owners and the wider community.

What, why, when, how, where and who is going to do something about this enormous breach of trust?
I stand in this 24th consecutive RCVS election, willing, ready and able.

Please send a clear message to the RCVS, veterinary schools and associations.
Please vote for essential change.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from Cambridge in 1980. After spending time as large animal house surgeon (intern) at Liverpool and in general practice, I undertook further training in equine surgery and diagnostic imaging, at Liverpool, subsequently gaining Diplomas in Veterinary Radiology and Equine Orthopaedics. I then studied for a PhD at the Royal Veterinary College, followed by a return to Liverpool as Lecturer in Equine Orthopaedics.

I was recruited to the RVC in 1993 to rebuild the equine clinical services, and promote equine research, subsequently becoming Head of the Large Animal Department, the College’s Vice-Principal for Teaching and Deputy Principal. In these roles, I was challenged to expand the College’s educational vision from a school for veterinary surgeons to one for the whole veterinary team, at all educational levels.

My broader contributions include being Chairman of the Advance HE panel involved in the award of National Teaching Fellowships. I am a past President of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation, the European College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. I have chaired the RCVS Education Committee, its CertAVP and CPD Subcommittees, and the Graduate Outcomes and Legislation Working Groups, and also served on the Disciplinary and Standards Committees.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

My passion is the education of future veterinary professionals and their wellbeing. I have felt privileged to serve in a range of roles including as President of RCVS, contributing to development of the RCVS requirements for veterinary degree programmes, the PDP, the CertAVP and CPD, and also as Chairman of the Working Group that created the new Royal Charter. However, our work is never complete! If re-elected, I am keen to see all the Graduate Outcomes, CPD and Accreditation-related changes through to fruition.

In particular, I want to continue to champion “the scholarship of primary care” within RCVS, ensuring that all UK degrees have a major focus on developing expertise in primary care practice, the initial destination for most UK graduates. It is important that our work to ensure that the “expert generalist” is fully recognised is successful, if we are to support the wellbeing of all members of our professions.

The new Charter has been a milestone in the recognition of the whole veterinary team. Vet Futures has highlighted the public need alongside our responsibility for animal welfare. Therefore, we must work together to ensure that the central principle of “Under Our Care” is preserved and refreshed with advances in technology, and any delegation within the Veterinary Surgeons’ Act is matched to the skill set of those supporting veterinary services.

I have considerable experience of governance and committee chairmanship in the public and private sectors. Therefore, I feel I have the skills and experience necessary to help move the profession forward in these challenging times. As someone who has loved all the different roles that I have played during my veterinary career, I look forward to making my continued contributions to safeguarding the public, our profession and the animals to whom we have collectively dedicated our lives.
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Proposers: Dr Rosie Allister, Anthony Chadwick

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
Qualifications:
• Dick Vet graduate
• Diploma in Marketing
• Veterinary Public Health Certificate
• Official Veterinarian (OV)
• MA in Creative and Life Writing
Experience:
• Fifteen years in farm animal practice in north east Scotland, including OV work
• Farm animal veterinary advisor in Schering-Plough
• Temporary Veterinary Inspector in Defra’s Disease Emergency Control Centre during Foot & Mouth in 2001
• Farm animal welfare veterinary advisor in Defra
• BCVA Council, member of welfare and education committees
• Leadership roles in the Cabinet Office, HMRC, Scotland Office and the Ministry of Justice
• Animal Welfare Foundation Trustee
• RCVS Council
Personal interests:
• Travel, writing, photography
Currently:
• Mentoring vet graduates
• Newly qualified STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) ambassador
• Veterinary advisor on mental health and wellbeing research project at SRUC
• Member of the Global Network of Anti-Microbial Resistance and Infection Prevention
• On the SRUC and Moredun Boards I work in agriculture and related industries including consulting, education and research
• Member of RCVS vet school visitation team
• Revalidating as an OV
• Member of BVA, Central Veterinary Society, Association of Government Vets, Veterinary Public Health Association (pending), Veterinary Voices and VSGD Facebook forums

CANDIDATE STATEMENT
My background
I’ve worked in the agricultural sector my entire career as a livestock practitioner and farm animal veterinary advisor for industry and government. I am still immersed in the sector, working with Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) which delivers programmes, including vet nursing, across Scotland, and the Moredun. SRUC received the first Sarah Brown research award, funding invaluable work on mental health and wellbeing. On the British Cattle Veterinary Association Council for six years, I was a member of the welfare and education committees. I believe it’s fundamental that our profession’s diversity is reflected on Council, giving everyone a voice.

My priorities
• Mentoring vets to explore career paths and options, helping them find their niche.
• Widening access and increasing diversity in our profession. I am a new STEM ambassador and will increase awareness of the variety of veterinary roles with school children, parents and teachers, challenging misconceptions and stereotypes.
• Passionate that vets lead, and live, antimicrobial stewardship. I attended the groundbreaking meeting organised by the Small Animal Medicine Society, BSAVA and RVC to discuss how veterinary laboratories and practising vets can work together to improve prescribing to reduce antimicrobial resistance. We must protect our privileged position to prescribe.
• One Health and non-accidental injury in animals. I raise awareness of the relationship between human and animal abuse with human healthcare professionals through inter-professional collaboration and communication.

My promise
This is not all about me, it’s about professional give back. Using my contacts from clinical practice, industry, research and government I will be an ambassador, raising the profile and reach of the veterinary voice. I am committed to investing in student recruitment and graduate retention which underpins the future sustainability of our profession, would be honoured to bring my experience to Council and seek your vote.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from Glasgow Vet School 1971 and after a period in Veterinary Pathology, I moved into mixed practice in Lincolnshire.

In the early 1980s, I bought a traditional, 2-man, farm practice in Warwickshire; over the next 8 years, I transformed it into a 3-centre, 5-vet, modern mixed practice with a small animal/equine bias.

We were a VN training practice and I lectured to VN students at Matthew Bolton College, Birmingham.

I was an Agricultural Training Board and Open University tutor.

The practice was sold in 1990 and after 2 years’ locum work, I moved into single-handed, small animal practice in Dubai, where I had to deal with every eventuality, as it arose.

Back in UK after 10 years, I worked in mixed, mainly small animal practice until November 2012. Since then, I have been involved in regular small animal routine surgical work. In that role, I have been working with, and mentoring, both vet students and new graduates.

I am president of the Warwickshire Veterinary Clinical Club and I represented Warwickshire on BVA Council.

I served on RCVS Council from 2015-2019.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT
Most veterinary professionals are General Practitioners, but General Practice has ever increasing problems with recruitment and retention.

- General Practice is challenging
- Generalism is under-valued and under-rewarded.
- General Practice goes beyond ‘1st Opinion’.
- General Practice is far more than ‘Primary Care’.
- General Practitioners look after their patients’ health and welfare from the ‘start of life’ to ‘the end of life’.
- General practitioners support their clients throughout the lives of their animals.
- General Practice is not a stepping stone to Specialization.
- General Practice should not be the base of the career triangle, but the peak.
- Generalism is poorly taught
- Generalists should not be taught by Specialists
- General Practice is a team; it includes the Vet, RVN, Healthcare Assistant and Receptionists.
- A well led team is the key to success and fulfilment.
- Leadership benefits from experience.
- General practice has lost many of its experienced practitioners
- Our professions needs to embrace equality and fairness, not division.

I have spent most of my professional life (over 40 years) in General Practice and I am still very much involved; I have been at the forefront of the advances that we have made over the last 40 years. My common sense approach would continue to be a strong voice for the general practitioner within our professional body.
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Proposers: Dr Sam Hole, Marco Marcatili

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

After 32 years in first opinion practice I remain as passionate as ever about being a veterinary practitioner, dealing with the concerns of my clients and safe-guarding the welfare of animals. I still do my fair share of ‘on call’ work, so I fully understand the sensitivity of the ‘under our care’ issue.

I previously served for eight years on RCVS Council (until 2016). I have been a member of all its main statutory committees, including the Preliminary Investigation Committee and the Disciplinary Committee. I was instrumental in many major reforms including the new Royal Charter, creating a properly independent disciplinary process and reducing the size of Council itself.

I retired from Council to concentrate on developing our practice and mentoring our younger staff. In the intervening period I have designed and successfully managed building an award-winning Equine Clinic. If you want an active, highly experienced, hardworking Council member who can hit the ground running and will not shrink for calling the officer team to account then I ask for your support.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Currently only three members of RCVS Council could lay claim to being in full time first opinion practice – Council needs the perspective of working vets.

• Mental Health and Well Being – this is of paramount importance. An area over which the RCVS has direct control is its own complaints’ process. It is shocking; to learn from colleagues of College investigations taking months and in some instances more than a year simply to close cases. The College is wealthy (£18+ million currently in various reserves), the necessary resources must be allocated to enable much stricter key performance targets and ensure accountability if they are not met. The damage done to the mental health of Colleagues facing lengthy investigations, when they have done nothing wrong, should be preeminent in Council’s policy-making decisions. I categorically oppose any softening in the standard of proof in disciplinary cases from ‘so as to be sure’ to ‘balance of probabilities’.

• ‘Under Care’ – whilst 24 / 7 care has always been a core veterinary value I believe it is unreasonable in a society which now shops around for veterinary services, to require OOH’s services to be provided ‘as of right’ to anyone. Clients should be expected to register with a practice under clearly stated terms as to what level of care will be provided.

• Brexit – is now a reality. Therefore, our profession needs to embrace political fact and establish how we can benefit from it. We have many excellent European Colleagues; our first priority must be to ensure that they remain in the UK.

• Openness and Transparency – should be central to everything the RCVS does – too many Council papers, including the future of our London Offices, are being marked ‘confidential’. When last on Council I published a record of every Council meeting I attended, which I will do again.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Qualifying from Cambridge in 1986, I spent 6 years in general practice moving from mixed through equine to 100% small animals, gaining my radiology certificate in 1990. Returning to academia in 1992, I spent 10 years at Bristol and the RVC gaining my PhD, certificate in cardiology and diploma in small animal medicine which has led to specialist and advanced practitioner status. Following a brief period in industry, I now work in private specialist practices seeing medicine and cardiology referrals and in general practices teaching and seeing in-clinic referrals. I have also set up a small animal referral centre. I was awarded my RCVS Fellowship for meritorious contribution to clinical practice in 2016.

Currently 50% time in clinics, I spend the remainder pursuing other interests within the veterinary profession particularly education and support for general practitioners through RCVS Council, BSAVA Education Committee chair, responding to case enquiries, providing CPD and mentoring general practitioners, certificate and fellowship candidates. I am also involved in two charities as trustee of Cats Protection and Chair of Trustees of the Wildheart Trust. I have lectured worldwide to wide variety of veterinary professionals as well as writing peer-reviewed articles and textbooks.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the RCVS Council and staff over the past 7 years, the last 3 as treasurer. During this time, I have encountered a dedicated, fascinating and rewarding group of people with a vast range of different skills, experience and knowledge, determined to help the veterinary professions continue to thrive and grow.

If re-elected to Council, my focus will be on promoting just, inclusive and supportive work environments with an emphasis on personal development and quality improvement so that diverse veterinary teams thrive, ensuring the profession remains vigorous, vibrant and attracts great people to work within it. Key areas of work necessary to achieve this include:

• Workforce – we need to support young graduates, promote flexible working and improve routes for those wishing to return to work.
• Communicating our diverse clinical and non-clinical skills as veterinary surgeons and scientists to the general public and government.
• Facilitating robust, life-long learning through achievable further professional qualifications and effective CPD.

Over the 30 years since I qualified the profession has changed hugely and I can only foresee this rate of change increasing as new technologies and ways of communicating become available in a much more 24/7 world. Having an engaged, forward thinking Royal College and regulator is critical to the continued development of the professions and I am committed to ensuring governance of the RCVS carries on developing so that it is transparent, accessible, relevant and responsive to our current, rapidly changing world.

My CV clearly shows my broad and current experience of the profession with strong links to general practice. Allied to this I understand the needs of veterinary education, research and business as well as the importance of good governance and forward planning. I would urge you all to vote and, better still, vote for me.
• RCVS Council currently comprises 34 members: 18 are elected veterinary surgeon members; eight are university-appointed chosen by the eight UK veterinary schools with RCVS accreditation (these being Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Nottingham, and Surrey); two are appointed veterinary nurse members; and six are appointed lay members. In addition the Chief Veterinary Officer attends RCVS Council as an ex-officio observer.

• This year six current Council members are due to retire at this year’s Royal College Day on Friday, 10 July 2020. All were eligible for re-election although only three incumbents chose to re-stand this year.

• This year a total of eight veterinary surgeons have put themselves forward as candidates for RCVS Council, with three elected places available.

• In 2018, a Legislative Reform Order (LRO) to change the College’s governance arrangements was passed by the Houses of Parliament. The changes include a reduction in the size of Council (meaning that there are only three elected places available in this year’s election), a phased reduction in the number of university-appointed members, and no longer having Privy Council representatives but, instead, having appointed lay and veterinary nurse members.

• The full biographies and manifestos of each candidate can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetvote20 where videos of the candidates answering questions submitted directly by members of the profession can also be found.

• You may vote online or by post. Full voting instructions are printed on the separate ballot paper enclosed with this booklet.

• If your ballot paper is not enclosed please contact Luke Bishop, RCVS Senior Communications Officer, on 020 7202 0784 or l.bishop@rcvs.org.uk to arrange for a duplicate to be sent to you.

• The result of the election will be announced after the voting period closes. The elected candidates will take up their four-year terms at the Annual General Meeting of the RCVS which will take place on Friday 10 July 2020 at One Great George Street.

• The RCVS Council election is run independently by Civica Election Services (formerly Electoral Reform Services) – the UK’s leading independent supplier of ballot and election services.

• The deadline for receipt of all votes – whether online or by post – is 5pm on Friday 24 April 2020.

Vote online* at www.cesvotes.com/vetvote20

Vote by post by returning your ballot paper in the pre-paid envelope provided.

*Look out for the secure personalised link in the email from ERS.