Council election: vote online, by text or by post

• Fourteen candidates standing for six places – see inside for biographies and manifestos
• Voting closes at 5pm on Friday, 27 April 2012
Mr Christopher Barker
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Proposers: Michael Jessop, Iain Richards

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
Chris Barker qualified from Bristol with honours in 1980. Since then he has worked in a wide range of first opinion practices (mixed, pure equine, small animal), including seven years working with final year veterinary students as clinician in what was then the Glasgow University Veterinary Practice in Lanark. Since 1994 he has run a small animal practice in Carlisle with his wife Kirsty. This 4 vet, 4 VN practice has held both the BSAVA Practice Standard and RCVS Tier 2 status, has achieved the Investors in People award on three occasions, and currently takes VN students on placement from four different nursing colleges.

Chris achieved the CertVR from practice in 1991, and obtained an MLitt for archaeological research in 1989. Beyond work his interests include skiing, golf and DIY, keeping his English Setter fully exercised and acting as taxi service to his two sons. He is team manager for the Carlisle U12 rugby team, Chairman of the Wigton BP Scout Group, and last year qualified as an ECB cricket umpire.

He has spent one term on SPVS Council, and was the only independent practitioner called to give oral evidence to the EFRACom enquiry in 2005.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
‘Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency’. So concludes the advice note to those seeking election to RCVS Council. However, given thirty years of experience in first opinion practice I would find it nigh on impossible not to reflect the concerns of the practising vet. As I hope I did successfully when called to give oral evidence before EFRACom.

At a time when regulation is expected to be both ‘proportionate’ and ‘risk-based’, it is vital that whenever Council seeks to extend the scope of its powers that it provides satisfactory evidence of ‘need’, convincing evidence that any proposed ‘remedy’ will have the desired effect, and demonstrates that a proper cost-benefit analysis has been performed. For every appointed academic, with black and white views of what practice can and should provide, Council should have an active practitioner detailing the compromises implicit in the provision of private veterinary services, and showing how any regulatory framework can founder should the practitioner be unable to deliver unrealistic demands.

Our governing body must recognise that the creation of a perfectly dovetailed system of regulation, based on systems established in sister professions maintained by the public purse, will do little to advance animal welfare should any consequent increase in practice overheads put veterinary treatment beyond the financial reach of an increased number of pet owners.

It is a matter of regret that those with ultimate responsibility for the recent uncontrolled overspends at the RCVS are not currently up for re-election – a protest vote risks displacing those Council Members who recognised the errors and did what they could to highlight them both to Council and beyond. But for those who wish to see change and increased scrutiny within the RCVS, I offer myself as a candidate for election.
Candidate Biography

After spending time early in my career undergoing further clinical training in the UK and the USA, I became a Lecturer in Emergency and Critical Care at the Royal Veterinary College (2003-2008). During that time I was very involved with the running of both the referral and first opinion emergency service as well as teaching on veterinary undergraduate, postgraduate and veterinary nurse programmes. In 2008, I took up the post of Clinical Director with Vets Now where I have a wide ranging role overseeing clinical and professional standards, as well as being fully involved with the structure and running of a veterinary business. I also provide clinical support to Pet Blood Bank and Veterinary Poisons Information Service and was the 2011 recipient of the BSAVA Melton award. I have lectured widely throughout the UK and internationally and hope any of you I have met have found me to be down to earth, practical and pragmatic about the realities of clinical veterinary practice.

As the current President of EVECCS (European Veterinary ECC Society) and having volunteered for both BSAVA and ACVECC in the past, I am also well aware of the commitment involvement with professional organisations requires.

Candidate Manifesto

The veterinary profession is one that I am hugely proud to be a part of. However, I believe that future strengthening of our profession requires a change in the culture and relationship between the profession and the RCVS. Since first seeing practice as a teenager, I have seen how the profession has changed and am convinced it will continue to need to adapt to the wider world we find ourselves in. This means that the RCVS, whilst recognising its clear and essential statutory role, will also need to change.

If elected, over the next 4 years, I will work to see the RCVS focus on two main areas. Firstly the culture, competence and governance of the organisation itself must be improved; this process has already started but I believe the RCVS Councillors must have an on-going and more proactive role in ensuring the RCVS itself is fit for purpose and fulfils its function in a more transparent and “real-world” manner. Secondly, communication both to the profession and the general public must be markedly improved so that there is real clarity of the expectations that are placed on a modern veterinary surgeon both within and outside the profession. The profession expects to be held to account but it also expects to know clearly the standards against which it will be judged.

With my diverse background in both the academic and commercial worlds, working closely with hundreds of normal first opinion practices, coupled with the fact that my clinical focus is on an area of veterinary medicine that often brings professional challenges into clear focus, I believe I am well placed to play a helpful and active role on the RCVS Council. Moreover I care deeply about our profession, and can bring a modern and common sense approach to protecting its future.
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Proposers: Caroline Argo, John Owen

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified from Liverpool in 1969. I then completed a PhD in growth and nutrition of ponies by 1976.
I put up my plate in Mid Wales in 1974, and ran a Large Animal practice until 1999, which veered from single-handed to three vets from time to time.
I am now working for DEFRA for TB clearance, and as a saleyard vet for Brightwell’s Horse Auctioneers. I am now also a farmer.
I have been variously elected as an RCVS Councillor since 1987, with blips, as you do. I have served on most committees, chaired the then External Affairs and was Treasurer in 1999. Most recently I have been on the Advisory and Planning and Resources Committees. I am Chair of the Riding Establishments sub-Committee.
I am a Steward of the Joint Measurement Board, and I was an appointed Councillor to RVC for some years. I was a lay member of Professional Conduct Board of the British Psychological Society for ten years from 1999, ending my term as the Chair of the Investigatory Committee.
I have also worked as an animal trials contractor for pharmaceutical firms, organised, commissioned, and monitored many clinical trials to VICH standards.
I am on the Register of Expert Witnesses and Expert Witness.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I am standing again for two principal reasons. I am concerned about the financial control of the College. There have been large overspends at the College which were only brought to light after a great deal of effort by a small number of councillors including myself which has culminated in a reorganization which has yet to be agreed.
The College is trying to alter the VSA with an LRO to make the disciplinary process more independent, it is not yet clear what the effect of this will be on the Council and yourselves and I would like to be there in sorting that out.
I am not yet convinced that these proposals are going stop the waste of your money that has occurred and I can usefully contribute to improvements.
Secondly, I am concerned that the college is losing sight of some of its minor responsibilities. It has a statutory obligation to maintain a list of Riding Establishment inspectors, but this has become the fox hunting debate de nos jours. This is an animal welfare duty that it was quite happy to support forty years ago, but now is under constant threat for nugatory sums of money. As Chair of this body, I wish to see this sniping finished with.
I have been a practitioner for all my career and I try to bring the views of those of us who are in practice to bear upon some of the more idealistic ideas that are promoted.
It is most important for the Council to remember that the vast majority of members are in practice, and that it is absolutely essential that your voice is heard, and to remember that it is your money that is being spent.
I would really appreciate your vote.
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Proposers: Christopher Booth, Paul Nally

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified from the University of Bristol in 2006, and joined a mixed practice in North Yorkshire, spending much of my time on local farms. I then worked as a locum, before being employed at the RSPCA clinic in Southampton as the senior vet. Last year I set up my own company, predominantly working as a locum in small and mixed practice. Although I am probably the youngest candidate asking for your vote in these elections I have worked in a range of practices across the profession, as part of a large team or as sole charge, doing out of hours work as part of a rota, or as a locum for OOH providers. I have also worked in much of the country, from Yorkshire to Southampton and from Mid Wales to London. I have a particular interest in canine arthritis and chronic pain management.

I have also retained links with the University of Bristol and last year was elected to be a convocation representative to the Court of the University.

Thank you for giving up your time to read this, I would be grateful for your support and look forward to working with you to promote our profession.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
The veterinary profession plays vital roles, promoting and protecting animal welfare and human wellbeing. All branches of our profession have crucial parts to play from safeguarding food production to nurturing the bond between owners and companion animals. Royal College should take the lead in enabling the profession to perform these roles by actively promoting the profession and its capabilities.

I would encourage Royal College to communicate clearly with the public when issues such as insurance fraud arise in the media. Royal College ought to feel able to be robust in defending the profession from unwarranted attacks, but this will only be possible if Royal College is also seen to be vigorous in dealing with wrongdoers.

The profession also deserves good governance, especially when Royal College is spending our money. At the moment, as highlighted by the McKelvey report, there is a lack of transparency and therefore a lack of accountability within Royal College. I would aim to improve openness so that the profession can see that lessons have been learnt. This year Royal College has announced the end of paper versions of the Register to ‘...reduce costs to members...’. It would be great to see this saving passed back to members.

Finally, all of this requires our profession being able to have our voice heard. Our representatives can only represent us and speak on our behalf if they first listen to us. I wish to serve on Council because I believe that we are a great profession with wonderful members and I wish to serve you, by listening to you and putting your points forward to make sure that you have a voice. My email address is at the top of this page, please contact me to discuss particular issues. Please give me your vote so I can serve you.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from Bristol in 1982, then worked in small animal practice. In 1986 I completed my MVM and CertVR at Glasgow.

I joined the Glasgow PDSA and remained there for 20 years, latterly becoming Staff Association Representative. Currently self-employed, this enables me to work with a range of local practitioners and get to better understand their views and concerns. The majority of my work now is for out of hours (OOH) providers. I have worked for Vets Now and Pets A and E, but I mainly work for Vets 999 which is run by, and provides for, a number of practices local to Stirling.

I have served on the RCVS Council for four years and am also on the RCVS Disciplinary Committee. My areas of special interest include employment law and in particular the importance of transparent and fair process.

I have three grown up daughters and we are all keen horse riders and owners so I keep in touch with my veterinary equine colleagues and their current issues.

I serve on local committees (Strathendrick Riding Club, Trossachs Access Group, PTA), but the RCVS and its Council are my chief interests and focus.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I have been on RCVS Council since 2008. In 2011 I spent 55 days on Council business. I am honoured and privileged to represent you and would appreciate your vote again.

I represent vets at the coal face. Much of my work is out of hours giving me an insight into problems delivering this service. Being a working mother I appreciate the need for a good work life balance. In this context I have represented the profession on the working party on the working time directive and out of hours provision. More changes are required and in particular I believe house calls should be at the veterinary surgeon’s discretion.

On the Disciplinary Committee (DC) I have provided a practitioner’s perspective; striving for a fair process and seeking consistent outcomes. I support the Legislative Reform Order (LRO), which will enable the DC to be independent of Council.

In November, the McKelvey Report was published to address the College’s over-spend on two major head office projects. The report, correctly in my view, highlighted the need for robust internal auditing and governance guidelines, which have now been instigated.

Recently, practising members on Council have formed an informal ‘practitioners group’ putting forward a report on this and other matters to relevant working parties for consideration. Now is the ideal time to radically restructure and streamline Council work and committees, achieving a better, more accountable structure which reflects the needs of practitioners.

Last year only around 14% of the electorate voted. I am one of only five women in first-opinion practice on Council despite women now representing over 50% of the profession. I am currently the only elected member from Scotland. I am seeking your vote to raise the profile of some key issues for the profession: working hours, out of hours provision and the proposed LRO.
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Proposers: Timothy Greet, Freda Scott-Park

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified from Cambridge University in 1976 and worked for three years in Buckinghamshire in mixed practice with equine bias. Returning to Jersey I became a partner of the David Place Veterinary Hospital in 1982. The Practice relocated to the New Era Veterinary Hospital in 1998. Employing 13 Veterinary surgeons, it includes two PSS accredited branch surgeries and an equine unit. In 2004 I gained the General Practice Certificate (Equine Practice) from the European School of Veterinary Postgraduate Studies. My main clinical interest is equine work, although I consult daily in the small animal hospital and share administrative duties.

I am Honorary Veterinary Surgeon to the Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Honorary Veterinary Surgeon and Vice President of the Jersey Race club.

Together with my partners I am one of the Deputy Jersey States Veterinary surgeons.

I served as a co-opted member of the RCVS Advisory Committee from 2003-2007. Since election to Council in 2008 I am a member of the Disciplinary Committee and RCVS representative on the BVA Ethics and Welfare group. I sat on the original Legislative Reform working party and for two years, the now disbanded Public Affairs Committee.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I endorse the review of the Royal College’s Complaints and Disciplinary process delivered in June 2010. This has produced the new Health Protocol and development of the Performance Protocol that is currently ‘for consultation’. The new Code of Professional Conduct, the Practice Standards Scheme and proposed Non-statutory mediation service are further examples of modern pro-active regulation. The big prize will be the passage of the Legislative Reform Order through Parliament, which completes the overhaul of membership of the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary committees to outside Council. With this final separation of powers, it will be easier for the College to provide guidance and support to members through the new pro-active regulatory approach.

The review of post graduate qualifications should not ignore the very many old-style certificate holders who have amassed a wealth of experience in their subject designated field. For many, their reputation and results attract referrals from colleagues rather than the letters after their name, however the review is timely and relevant, to inform the public and indicate a potential career path for new graduates.

Statutory regulation of Veterinary nurses may be one step closer but still many years away, however consideration should be given to allow Veterinary Nurses to be independent of the RCVS and develop autonomously. Opportunities for the restructuring of the College due to the near-future availability of the Preliminary Investigation and Disciplinary Committee members exists, from which a more dynamic model may evolve, though more imminent changes are prioritised after the McKelvey report.

I welcome the President’s recent letter to the media concerning alleged pet insurance fraud, and want the College to maintain its ongoing support of the profession’s integrity.

I seek re-election to that end, to contribute to all aspects of College work as a first opinion practitioner.
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Proposers: Paul Jepson, Nichola Paull

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Educated at Salesian College (Grammar) Battersea.

Qualified BVetMed at the Royal Veterinary College becoming MRCVS in 1978.
• equine practice in Gloucestershire and Hertfordshire
• small animal house surgeon at the Blue Cross Hospital in Victoria, London.

Founding Partner of House and Jackson, Blackmore, Essex in 1980. Practice now 12 vets with separate equine and companion animal divisions. Includes diagnostic, laboratory, in patient and surgical facilities for all species.
• Tier 2 RCVS Practice Standards Scheme
• VN training centre since the early 1980s.

Positions of Responsibility
• BHS Equine Welfare Officer Essex 1985-1996
• Pet Insurance Veterinary Advisers Group/Veterinary Advisers Group to the ABI 1996-2009
• BVA representative on RCVS/BVA Riding Establishments Committee
• RCVS appointed representative to Farriers Registration Council
• LANTRA chair of Veterinary Allied Industries Group
• Veterinary Association for Wildlife Management Committee
• BEVA Council 2001-2010 including insurance, welfare, farriery and AI responsibilities
• Chair NEWC subcommittee for equine barefoot trimming 2006
• Chair of joint BEVA/Horse Industry Group promoting regulation of livery yards 2007-2010
• BEVA President 2009

Other interests include keeping livestock, tennis, skiing and riding.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I am standing for Council as a practitioner, still working in the profession of which I am proud. I believe the typical veterinarian in the field manages the patients under their care with skill and compassion. The general public broadly continue to respect our vocation in these terms and in spite of occasional adverse publicity this remains a positive and special relationship.

As a profession this “special relationship” needs to be maintained and enhanced wherever possible as we look forward to change. Increasing numbers of vets, reform of the VSA and the development of the veterinary nursing profession all will bring their own challenges but these need to be embraced within the context of a robust and healthy outward looking veterinary profession. The increasing feminisation of the profession inevitably also brings change and this too needs to be recognised and managed constructively.

I support the concept of practice standards but that the process of recognition needs to be simplified and made less bureaucratic, to encourage a wider take up and acceptance of this as the norm.

Any development of parallel veterinary providers must be in cooperation with the veterinary profession ensuring appropriate educational, regulatory and welfare standards are maintained.

I believe in evidence based medicine and that those providing alternative therapies need to justify their acceptance.

While I am mixed practice based, my previous broad professional interests bring an abundance of experience particularly in the equine field, in that of insurance, with the development of the Animal Welfare Acts and other welfare issues and in the field of veterinary nursing.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I qualified from Liverpool University and have worked in general veterinary practice all my working life. I have enjoyed all types of practice and having set my plate up in Lancashire as a sole practitioner I have seen the veterinary practice develop into one of the largest in the North West and have the scars to prove it. For many years I lectured part-time at Myerscough College and was awarded a Fellowship for services to the veterinary profession. Liverpool University awarded me an honorary doctorate of veterinary science in 1994 for services to the profession.

My long involvement in veterinary politics includes both the BVA and the RCVS. As a member of the RCVS I have served on every committee, I was privileged to be elected as President at a very exciting and challenging period in 1993. In recent years I have been chairman of the Education and Primary Qualification committees and so have taken a very keen interest in the training of new graduates particularly their EMS and PDP.

Since retiring from practice I have taken non-executive roles in animal welfare organisations and I am currently Chairman of the international equine charity World Horse Welfare.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

Dramatic evolution of the veterinary profession is happening all around us, from the changes in the way practices are owned to the stringent new requirements of clients and government. To achieve the best outcome from any changes that are introduced it is essential that we have a Royal College Council that includes members with a broad range of practice together with the ability to work as part of a team. I am seeking re-election to Council because I believe I have acquired the knowledge and experience which can help serve the college and the profession over the next few crucial years.

The challenges facing the College over the next few years will be profound and require skills acquired by long involvement in the College and foresight gained by having liaisons with other professions and related bodies. I feel passionately that the College must positively debate its future direction with new ideas and not just move all the deckchairs. The basic principles of the Veterinary Surgeons Act must be reinforced to ensure that those admitted to the register meet basic standards. Regulation that is fair, cost effective, efficient and timely is vital to maintain the support of the public, the profession and government.

I was responsible for publicly exposing the College’s overspends and wish to scrutinise and monitor the process that will be put in place to ensure this never happens again. My present responsibility is to chair the appointment board to select the new chief executive for the RCVS and I intend to assist and to facilitate a smooth transfer for the new officer into the role.

I will use my considerable knowledge of the background of the college’s procedures and standards to encourage it to respond positively and innovatively for the benefit of the profession in the future.
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Proposers: David Cuffe, Roger Meacock

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
1972 Graduate, Royal Veterinary College, London.
1980s Established four location mixed practice Sydney, Australia.
1980s Gradual dawning that the domestic carnivores under my care were all adversely affected by junk food diets. Periodontal disease affected most; niggly malaise and minor diseases affected younger animals. End stage cancer, diabetes and organ failure affected older animals. As if by magic a diet based on raw meaty bones prevented most and cured a majority of pets’ ailments. Owners marvel how old animals become like kittens and puppies again.
1992 Commenced campaign to educate and inform the veterinary profession, pet-owning and wider public about the junk pet-food fraud.
1996 Website established www.rawmeatybones.com
2001 Raw Meaty Bones published
2004 Raw Meaty Bones nominated for Australian College of Veterinary Scientists prize http://bit.ly/w4aeGy
2005 Work Wonders published
2005 Early Day Motion
2006 to present: Lectures, articles and political campaigns for better pet health, human economy and natural environment.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
My 1998 RCVS election manifesto posed basic questions:
Does it concern you that modern small animal veterinary science is founded on information derived from artificially fed animals?
Is it of concern that the majority of artificially fed animals suffer from periodontal and other diet induced diseases including an “AIDS-like” condition? http://bit.ly/zfVG1P
Does the absence of naturally fed controls, in veterinary practice and clinical research, suggest a drift towards pseudo science?
The human medical and dental professions extol the benefits of a healthy natural diet, but the veterinary profession is influenced at every level by the junk pet-food industry. Does this matter?
Roger Meacock asks why basic questions remain to be addressed let alone answered:
Can the veterinary profession, regulated by the RCVS, claim to be an authority on animal health whilst failing to acknowledge and investigate concerns first raised in 1991 – concerns that are endorsed annually by hundreds of veterinarians voting at RCVS elections?
David Cuffe comments http://bit.ly/w4aeGy:
I have voted for you in every RCVS election for many years. I have bought, read, and loaned out Raw Meaty Bones, and after most of a career automatically warning against feeding bones I eventually saw sense and realised the degree of advertising propaganda which encouraged me to think, incorrectly, that dogs are ‘omnivores’ and that feeding cereal based commercial food was largely responsible for increased longevity in dogs and cats. So most UK (I am Irish, but London based) vets believe, unthinkingly; as I did. They are genuine in these beliefs if somewhat dense. But that is the effect of merchandising propaganda on a largely unquestioning profession.

The veterinary profession, RCVS and DEFRA have the resources and the legal and moral obligation to investigate the pet food/pet disease connection. Please consider and please show your support.

Thank you.

Editor’s note: long urls have been shortened for publication using www.bitly.com
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Proposers: Josephine Cottee, Duncan Ross

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified from the Royal Veterinary College London in 1977 and am currently a co director in a 9-vet small animal practice in North Kent. I am a member of BVA and BSAVA and a former chairman and treasurer of Kent BSAVA. I was chairman of Petsavers for 2 years.

My professional interests are orthopaedics and tortoise medicine.

I enjoy sailing on the East Coast, skiing in the winter and gardening in the summer.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I am a general practitioner in a private practice, I am respectful of, but not in awe of, the Royal College and if you elect me I will question areas of concern and work for the appropriate changes. I would be accessible via the internet.

I understand the College’s statutory duty to protect client’s interests but I believe it is possible to do this without causing veterinary surgeons to practice defensive medicine for fear of the disciplinary committee. I would like to see the rapid rejection of complaints where there is no evidence of professional misconduct. I do not think the college understands that clients may make or threaten complaints in order to obtain fee reductions.

It is appalling that the College withholds evidence in some disciplinary cases, apparently for data protection law reasons, and uses the same excuse to deny access to its own McKelvey report into corporate governance and financial overspending. The lawyers within Belgrave House must act in future to pre empt similar problems and Councillors must have the courage to ensure the College is full and open with its members, and that no activity is kept secret.

I have been disappointed with the implementation of the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) – so clearly are the 45% of practices which have still not joined. It should be possible to harmonize PSS and Nurse Training Practice inspections and to avoid the unnecessary regular changes which I believe discourage more practices from joining.

With the healthy financial position of the College and an ever increasing membership I would resist increases in registration fees in the foreseeable future and look to extend the reduction scheme for new graduates. I am always interested in any savings on expenditure that can be made.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from Cambridge in 1980. After spending time as large animal house surgeon 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 Farm Animal and Equine Clinical Department, and the College’s Vice-Principal for Teaching. 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 first degree, postgraduate degree and CPD levels.

My broader contributions include being Vice-Chairman of the Horse Trust, and a member of the Higher Education Academy Panel involved in the award of National Teaching Fellowships. I am currently Secretary of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation and a past President of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons. As a non-Council member, I chair the RCVS CertAVP Subcommittee, and am a member of the Legislation Working Party.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
Having had the privilege of serving as a member of Council from 2001 to 2010, I recognise the pivotal role RCVS plays in the maintenance of public confidence in the professional regulatory model that I believe has led to our justifiable reputation for high standards and integrity. This position has been hard-won, and it is important that RCVS remains “fit for purpose”, and our contributions to the public good and our role in serving the public and their animals are well-articulated.

A key element of any profession is its educational programmes that lead to the specialist knowledge and skills its members command. We must continue to improve our schools in order to meet society’s requirements for graduates with appropriate professional skills. Another important area for us to get right is clarity around specialisation and the important “middle tier” occupied by certificate holders and others with years of experience in the profession. Parallel developments at European level have led to the creation of a European Board of Veterinary Professional Development that is looking to clarify the status of “advanced” practitioners across Europe as a valuable intermediate level below that of the specialist. It will be important that the UK profession, with all its experience of postgraduate qualifications, plays a full part in these developments.

In addition to my clinical background, I have considerable experience of committee chairmanship in the public and private sectors, as well as budget management and staffing issues. I have also been involved in governance reviews in two organisations. This means that I was always able to contribute to the full range of debates at RCVS. The RCVS is not immune to the current challenges facing society and I feel that I have the skills and experience necessary to help move the profession forward in these difficult times.

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Proposers: David Church, Susan Dyson
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I was born 63 years ago in 1949 and qualified from the Dick Vet in Edinburgh in 1972. I completed a Ph.D in 1976 in virology studying NDV in chickens, sponsored by the Wellcome Foundation.

During this time, I worked in large animal practice in Northern Ireland and then spent two years in Reading.

In 1977, I became a partner at Attimore Veterinary Hospital, Hertfordshire, running the laboratory and specialising in small animal medicine but continuing my equine interests.

By 1986, I had married, divorced, had two children and started my own small animal practice in Nottingham. By the time I sold in 1995, we had 8 vets and 4 branches.

After studying at Derby University, I qualified as an Early Years Primary School teacher, spent 15 years teaching, and remarried. Nowadays, I locum and I’m the children and youth worker at our church.

I was heavily into sport: mountaineering, hockey, squash but, following my knee replacement, have settled for cycling, skiing and running children’s clubs.

In the 1980s I served on the Nottinghamshire BVA but have not been active in Veterinary Politics, although I stood as Conservative candidate in the local elections in Edinburgh.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

There’s only one reason for my candidacy: the ‘cascade’.

For a period, I was not a practising veterinary surgeon. When I resumed practice, I was astounded that the UK veterinary profession had simply accepted the cascade. The cascade means a veterinary surgeon cannot prescribe generics, even a generic that had been in use for decades before the licensed veterinary product was marketed; animals die because the licensed veterinary product is less effective than licensed or generic human products; veterinary pharmaceuticals, safe and effective for decades, cease to be manufactured because the quantity sold does not justify the needless deaths of experimental animals during the licensing process and the cost of the license.

EU Directive 2001/82/EC forms the basis which prevents veterinary surgeons exercising their best clinical judgement, but only in the UK is the interpretation so rigidly upheld.

Nowadays, vets are proscribed in their prescription, the clients pay more, insurance fees rise, while the public and the media complain of excessive veterinary fees.

Modifying the cascade to restore the veterinary surgeon’s ability to prescribe the correct medication for patient and client, while ensuring that pharmaceutical companies have an incentive to develop new remedies for our patients, need not mean increased risk for our patients or lack of protection for our clients. Weirdly, our Government orders that our clients must be prescribed generics for themselves. The RCVS should be campaigning to alert the public to the dangers of the cascade and asking the UK government to gain exemption.

Like many candidates, I represent the ordinary working vet and pet owner. I’ve been an assistant, a boss, a director of a veterinary hospital, worked in large, mixed and small animal practice, dabbled in exotics and homeopathy, done pure research… and taught little children to read and write.
Mr Richard Stephenson  
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Proposers: Stuart Holland, Benjamin Mayes

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I have been in practice for 24 years, currently a partner in an 18 vet small animal / equine practice in Lichfield Staffordshire. All of our practices are within the RCVS standards scheme. This broad range of experience enables me to understand the issues faced by vets in the real world.

During my first term on RCVS Council I have served on a range of committees, notably the Disciplinary Committee, as Vice chairman of the Public Affairs Committee, Chairman of the Equine Subject Board, member of the Communications Board and currently as a member of the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Veterinary Legislation Working Party.

I have been instrumental in establishing a Practitioner’s Group of Council members dedicated to providing Council with informed opinions from a practice perspective.

I have published numerous papers on issues ranging from the OOH provision to the effects of increased student debt. I have been a very active member of Council, attending every meeting, proposing two motions and dealing promptly with issues raised with me by members.

Outside of the RCVS I am also a member of the Worshipful Company of Farriers Examination Board and a committee member of the Staffs and Derbyshire Veterinary Club.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
• It is essential that the practising branch of the profession retains a powerful voice in the affairs of the College and I will continue to vigorously oppose any moves via a new Veterinary Surgeons Act or otherwise to dilute the democratic accountability of the organisation.
• Because of its value in teaching practical skills EMS is one of the treasures of our educational system, if elected I will continue to support it.
• Our commitment to 24/7 care for our patients is a core veterinary value which I will continue to defend whilst being open to innovations in its delivery.
• I will continue to advocate and support a more pastoral approach by the RCVS in dealing with members with health or performance related problems. I have enthusiastically backed the new protocols designed to help members retain their fitness to practice, thus avoiding disciplinary action. I will continue to push for the College to be proactive in dispute resolution.
• I believe that the RCVS has a role in fostering the next generation of veterinary surgeons and needs to monitor the effects of the recent increases in university tuition fees.
• I support the RCVS-PSS and the proposal in the new draft Guide to Professional Conduct to make the ability to communicate in an appropriate language a professional obligation.
• RCVS Council needs a good balance between experienced and new members therefore I pledge that if successful in this election I will not stand again in future years.
• Council should apologise when it gets things wrong – like the recent overspends on two major projects.

Working at the coal face of veterinary practice I know the problems and challenges that face you every day, I respectfully seek your support.

Thank you.
Dr Christopher ‘Kit’ Sturgess
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Proposers: Timothy Gruffydd-Jones, Karen Wendlandt

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified from Cambridge in 1986 and spent 6 years in first opinion practise moving from mixed through equine to small animals only. During this time I gained my certificate in radiology. My desire to ‘know more’ brought me back to university where I spent the next 10 years at Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College gaining my PhD, certificate in cardiology and diploma in small animal medicine. Following a brief period in industry, I worked in private referral practice for 7 years. During this time I set up a small animal referral centre that rapidly expanded year on year to meet the demand for the service we provided from general practitioners.

Last year I left full-time clinical work to spend more time with my young family and pursue my other interests within the veterinary profession particularly education and support for general practitioners. I have for many years examined and supervised medicine certificate and diploma candidates, and continue to support candidates for the new modular certificate. I am a RCVS recognised specialist in small animal medicine. I have lectured worldwide to the complete spectrum of the veterinary profession as well as writing peer-reviewed articles and textbooks.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I am passionate about being a veterinary surgeon and believe this is true of the vast majority of our profession who seek to deliver the best possible care for their patients and clients within the constraints of time, finances, facilities and knowledge. As a result the profession continues rightly to be held in high regard by the public.

Over the 25 years since I qualified the profession has changed hugely and I can only foresee this rate of change increasing in the future. In order to maintain our position as the default first choice for help and advice about all things animal I believe that we need to be at the forefront of these changes planning the way they affect delivery of veterinary services. Continuing education is key and many challenges need to be addressed both in developing and awarding professional qualifications and ensuring the quality of CPD that is delivered in this on-line age.

Recently many vets have enjoyed improvements in work-life balance but significant work-associated pressures remain. Health and welfare of veterinarians therefore needs to remain an important focus of the RCVS through its regulatory role in order for the profession to remain vigorous and vibrant.

My CV clearly shows that I have a broad view of the profession and I have retained strong links with the perspective of general practitioners. 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 have always brought great enthusiasm and dedication to the different appointments I have held and, if elected, I can bring a strong, committed, experienced voice to the RCVS council in support of rational change that is to the benefit of the profession, its members, their patients and owners.
Background information

• RCVS Council is made up of 42 members: four are appointed by the Privy Council, 14 by the veterinary schools and 24 by direct election. Each member is appointed for a four-year term of office.

• Every year, six members of Council retire at the Annual General Meeting, though they are eligible for re-election.

• In 2012, five existing Council members and nine new candidates are up for election.

• All biographies and manifestos have been published as submitted to the Editor.

• You may vote online, by SMS (text), 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 Ian Holloway at the RCVS (020 7202 0727 or i.holloway@rcvs.org.uk) who will arrange for an official duplicate to be sent to you.

• The result of the election will be formally announced at the Annual General Meeting of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons which will be held on Friday, 6 July 2012, at the Royal College of Physicians, London.

• The RCVS Council Election is run independently by Electoral Reform Services – the country’s leading provider of ballot advisory and management services to UK and worldwide organisations.

• The deadline for receipt of all votes is 5pm on Friday, 27 April 2012.