VN Council election: vote online, by text or by post

- Four candidates standing – see inside for biographies and manifestos
- Voting closes at 5pm on Friday, 26 April 2013
Miss Sue Badger
VN
7 Garstons Orchard, Wrington, North Somerset BS40 5LZ
T 01934 863471   E suebadger1@me.com
M 07802 440360

Proposers: Claire Fraser, Fiona Passmore

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I qualified as a veterinary nurse in 1976 and worked in a number of veterinary practices for 18 years before returning to the Berkshire College of Agriculture as a tutor. Two years later I moved to the University of Bristol’s Veterinary School where I remained until last year. At Bristol I taught at both certificate and undergraduate level and I gained a Certificate and Masters in Education during this time. I have served on BVNA Council twice and was President of the association in 2011, I was also honoured to receive the RCVS Golden Jubilee award in 2012. I have acted as external examiner to a number of institutions involved with VN training, most recently Central Qualifications.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
My involvement in veterinary nursing since the early seventies has afforded me a unique perspective into the development of the profession. My experience as a BVNA Council member, coupled with being an external examiner for a number of institutions and my contact with students over the past two decades has provided an insight into the expectations and tensions that exist for veterinary nurses in the UK in the 21st century. Veterinary nursing has changed beyond recognition during my career however; we need to be clear regarding the important objectives that we aspire to in the future. Qualified veterinary nurses are an integral part of modern veterinary practice and we can be confident that the RVN is here to stay but the legislation does not yet exist to define the role fully. VN Council has worked hard to facilitate the introduction of non-statutory regulation but whilst most VNs have embraced the development of a professional ethos, some appear to have difficulty subscribing to a culture of accountability or are not comfortable with a perceived increase in responsibility with no corresponding professional rights in law. Statutory regulation is the inevitable pathway that must be taken if veterinary nurses wish to be recognised as professionals in their own right, but it is critical that this opportunity is grasped fully and that the legislation that defines the role is fit for purpose both now and in the future. The amendment to Schedule 3 gave legal recognition to the veterinary nurse but the focus on minor acts of surgery has served to deflect from the true role of the VN which is to support the individual needs of the patient, in other words to nurse! If successful, I would work to ensure that this focus is maintained.
Candidates 2 of 4

Mrs Andrea Jeffery
DipAVN(Surgical) RVN
University of Bristol, Langford, Bristol BS40 5HB
T 01179 289662 E andrea.jeffery@bristol.ac.uk
M 07803 003224
Proposers: Dorothy Creighton, Perdi Welsh

Candidate Biography
Andrea trained as a nurse within the NHS before changing career and becoming a veterinary nurse (VN). She trained in a veterinary hospital in Staffordshire before moving to a referral hospital in Newmarket where she gained her Advanced Diploma in Surgical Nursing. Andrea began teaching veterinary nursing students in 1995 and has taught in both further and higher education. She gained her Certificate in Education in 1999 and Masters in Veterinary Nurse Education in 2004. Andrea is currently studying for a Doctorate in Education and her thesis is on ‘professionalism in veterinary nursing’. Andrea is programme director of the veterinary nursing degree programme at the University of Bristol and is involved in the education of up to 100 student veterinary nurses each year. As part of this role she visits and talks to student and qualified nurses in training practices across the UK.

Andrea was very proud to be awarded honorary membership of the BVNA four years ago. She is also a member of the Higher Education Academy.

Andrea has two children aged 13 and 8. She rows for Bristol in the Cornish Pilot Gig club which means she spends summer weekends sea-rowing off the Devon and Cornish coasts.

Candidate Manifesto
I became an elected member of VN Council when it first began in 2002. I was very proud to be the first veterinary nurse to chair VN Council from 2005 to 2009. Prior to this the chairman had been a veterinary surgeon. VN Council has achieved much as it moves into its 11th year. As a profession we now have a Non-Statutory register and the VN legislation working party (of which I was a member) have been working on behalf of the profession to find a way of protecting the title Veterinary Nurse to prevent those who are not VNs calling themselves VNs.

In 2012 the new Code of Professional Conduct for VNs was introduced and for the first time we now make the same declaration as veterinary surgeons as we join the register. This is important for our clients and the public to know we are putting animal welfare first in all that we do as veterinary nurses. This change came about after consultation with veterinary nurses nationally and through the work of the Guide working party which I chaired.

As the RCVS continues to work as a Regulator but stops being an Awarding Body for Veterinary Nursing it is important that the quality of education and training of student veterinary nurses is still very much something VN Council is engaged with. As someone who has taught student nurses for over 10 years both in the classroom and in the workplace, understanding what practices need from their nurses is vital to ensure we have professional nurses trained to the appropriate standard in order to deliver the care that our patients and their owners rightly expect. I believe that as an educator, if I am re-elected, I can be a useful member of VN Council in this respect.
I have been a qualified VN since 2004. I trained in Hinton St George, in a small first-opinion practice and I fell in love with the job. Once I qualified I began work as a locum, gaining experience and knowledge in other practices and hospitals, especially in orthopaedic and ophthalmologic nursing. I have also worked as a night nurse in a referral hospital.

I am currently employed at Coombefield Veterinary Hospital in Axminster where I was promoted to head nurse in July 2012. I enjoy many aspects of veterinary nursing, especially anaesthesia and surgery, however since becoming head nurse I have gained an interest in VN management and maintaining motivation and job satisfaction within the nursing team. I believe that the roles and responsibilities of the VN should be tailored to their individual strengths, and opportunities should be given for them to progress and improve their professional development.

I was persuaded to stand for council by my colleagues and tutors who saw my passion for improving the VN profession status and protecting the welfare of the patients in their care.

I am also a clinical coach and a member of the BVNA and BSAVA.

My manifesto is one of increasing veterinary nursing motivation and job satisfaction within their careers, by improving the desire of veterinary nurses to recognise the importance of improving autonomy, personal and professional development.

Veterinary nursing has changed in the past 10 years to a profession which is still developing and still needs veterinary nurses who are passionate about their jobs to promote the profession to the public and to set high standards of nursing. Veterinary nurses are vital to the whole veterinary profession; their nursing skills and knowledge are invaluable to the wellbeing of patients in our care. Nursing care plans are featured heavily in the training of veterinary nurses to ensure we look at the patients holistically and to make sure their needs are being fulfilled.

Since becoming head nurse and completing the advanced diploma, I am passionate about maintaining a high level of self-motivation of professional development for each nurse within the nursing team, to ensure that a high level of professional nursing care is provided to the patients and clients. I would like to see this method of management performed throughout practices and hospitals for all nurses to try and promote student and qualified veterinary nurses staying in practice by improving public recognition, employer support and personal and professional development. I hope this would also help improve each nurse’s overall wellbeing, as well as a professional one.

If elected, I would hope to promote and expand veterinary management and to continue to improve awareness of the veterinary nursing role with the general public and within the profession.
Miss Helen Tottey  
RVN  
18 Warnford Walk, Merryhill, Wolverhampton WV4 4YR  
M 07885 408811  E helen@plpet.co.uk  
Proposers: Karen Goulding, Victoria Postings

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I qualified in 1996 and after a couple of years working as a general nurse including out of hours, I was tasked with establishing full time nurse consulting. I enjoyed working alongside the vets helping educate and support clients and their pets, and to further assist in this role I gained additional qualifications in the BVNA’s Companion Animal Behaviour Certificate and City & Guilds Small Animal Clinical Nutrition.

In 2004 I left veterinary practice and worked as a Business Developer for Petplan. I learnt a lot during this time; not only how different practices worked, but also how the veterinary industry and committees/councils work with practices. However I missed veterinary practice and because of what I had learnt, I decided to set up my own practice, employing a vet. In 2007, after much planning, I opened Price Less Pets.

In 2008 I spoke at BVA congress in the contentious issues session with my presentation entitled “QVN’s should be allowed to give booster vaccinations”.

I recently sold my practice, but continue to be employed as an RVN. Having what I believe is a “well rounded” VN career is why I would like to contribute to VN Council.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

What can VN Council/RCVS do for us?

I admit that I believed the RCVS was “a closed shop” and didn’t listen to the actual issues affecting the day job but after attending the 50th Anniversary of Veterinary Nursing, I was pleasantly surprised to find out how wrong I was. Listening to how far the profession has progressed during the last 50 years was fascinating but also listening to the ideas and plans for our profession to continue to develop was really inspiring.

Although there are differing opinions on regulation of Veterinary Nursing I believe that it is of utmost importance for our profession to progress, benefiting both nurses and our patients. Other practice personnel may have valuable experience and should not be forgotten but there is no substitute for a recognised, validated qualification.

Another area of interest to me is communication and why did I (and many other VN’s) have such a negative opinion about our governing body? I can only speak for myself but again, I admit to not reading the RCVS News or regularly looking on the website until recently. Finding ways to improve communication between all practice staff including the younger members of the team and our governing body is important so we all feel part of any changes made.

I became interested in how decisions made on our behalf affect us when we lost our right to dispense POM-VPS/NFA-VPS products and the introduction of the SQP qualification. If I were elected my main area of interest would be our SQP status as well as how any future decisions taken would affect the working Veterinary Nurse, how communication could be improved to help ensure everyone knows their views can be heard and ultimately how regulation could ensure progression of our profession for our next 50 years.
From July 2013, VN Council (VNC) will be made up of 16 members: eight elected UK-based veterinary nurses (each serving a four-year term of office), two members of RCVS Council, two VNC-appointed veterinary surgeons and four VNC-appointed lay members.

Every year two elected council members retire at the Annual General Meeting, though they are eligible for re-election.

In 2013, one existing VN member and three new candidates are up election.

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 Annette Amato in the VN Department (020 7202 0713 or a.amato@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, 5 July 2013, at the Royal College of Physicians, London.

The VN 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, 26 April 2013.