Council election: vote online, or by post

• Sixteen candidates standing this year — see inside for biographies and manifestos.

• Voting closes at 5pm on Friday, 28 April 2017.
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED
This year we put the candidate biographies and manifestos online earlier than usual 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/vetvote17 in March and these will be available to view until the voting deadline at 5pm on Friday 28 April 2017.

This year the question topics include:

- Brexit and our relationship with the EU
- Alternative/complementary medicines
- Out-of-hours
- Mental health and wellbeing

The videos are also available to watch on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos
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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.
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Proposers: Faye Forsythe, Thomas Rejmak

**CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY**

Since graduating from Cambridge University in 1998 I have enjoyed a varied career in practice encompassing both smaller independents and a larger group. I’ve seen the challenges and satisfaction of general clinical practice first hand, as well as having significant management responsibilities.

Throughout my career, and beyond, I have always endeavoured to keep the protection and promotion of animal welfare as my number one priority.

My first job was in a mixed practice in Norfolk at the Old Golfhouse where I received good support as a new graduate. Having developed an interest in small animal medicine I moved to Goddard’s Wanstead Veterinary Hospital and gained the Certificate in Small Animal Medicine. After four busy years I spent a year travelling and performing voluntary neutering work in Thailand. Back in the UK I locumed for a period, including night work, before moving to North London as Head Vet of a small animal practice, Canonbury Vets.

Over 10 years I progressed into a Clinical Director role over three sites, as the business expanded. For the last year I have been London Veterinary Director for the RSPCA, a new role which oversees the RSPCA’s two London hospitals and two clinics.

**CANDIDATE MANIFESTO**

In order to perform its role of upholding veterinary standards the RCVS needs to understand and respond appropriately to the challenges facing the profession, while also ensuring that animal welfare is at the top of the agenda in all aspects of veterinary decision making.

The tensions between ensuring veterinary care for animals who require it, meeting client expectations and the demands of business are more pressing than ever. The RCVS has to show that it really understands these tensions and how they can impact adversely on both animal welfare and vets’ quality of life/job satisfaction.

The College needs to be clearer on what it expects of vets, especially in the face of limited client budgets, and veterinary educators must prepare vets for the job in the real world. Having mentored new and recent graduates I have seen a lack of confidence in taking a more pragmatic approach to cases. There is also a real fear of the RCVS, which has at least been recognised. There is much work still to be done around setting realistic expectations of owners.

Regarding veterinary education I would like to see more research into the effects that high debt levels are having on the career choices and opportunities of vets.

I am pleased that the RCVS has already taken a very pro-active approach in responding to Brexit. Recruitment can already be a challenge and we cannot afford to lose experienced colleagues. Having working alongside many valued colleagues from the EU I will stand up for their right to remain and continue to work here.

With a background in practice that cuts across private and charity, small independent and corporate, as well as a strong focus on animal welfare and ethics, I believe I am well placed to play a constructive role on Council.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from my home town of Edinburgh in July 2011. Following graduation I enjoyed three years in a mixed practice in Edinburgh where I had completed much of my EMS.

After realising that small animal practice and particularly medicine was where my main interest lay, I moved to Aberdeen and spent a year in small animal practice.

I set up as a self-employed small animal locum in August 2015 and since then have gained experience in a wide variety of practice settings throughout the UK, from academia to charity, corporate to independent.

As well as animal health and welfare, I feel passionately about upholding the mental and physical health and wellbeing of all members of the veterinary profession.

I was introduced to the benefits of Mindfulness, including stress and anxiety reduction, whilst working for a wellbeing holiday company in Greece last summer. Since then I have studied Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre.

As a keen traveller I have an active interest in the vet’s role in ‘One Health’ in developing countries. I’m looking forward to volunteering for a veterinary charity in Sri Lanka this year. I also enjoy distance running, pilates and yoga.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
The biggest current challenge facing our profession in my view is the high dropout rate and dissatisfaction of many vets, particularly recent graduates.

I have the motivation to take a stance on RCVS Council to address some of the multifactorial contributing issues and help reverse this trend.

My aim would be to ensure that all members of the veterinary community are confident, resilient, happy and well-supported; one of the ambitions issued in the ‘Vet Futures’ report.

‘Vet Futures’ encompasses aspects of animal health and welfare, the public and the profession, and forms the blueprint for the future. These areas are inter-linked. A vet with positive wellbeing is fundamental to providing a high standard of veterinary care and client service.

Whilst I welcome initiatives such as ‘Mind Matters’, which emphasise awareness and support of mental health and wellbeing in the profession, I can’t help but feel we’re somewhat missing the point. As we tell our clients, “prevention is better than cure”, so let’s apply that to our own wellbeing.

We must address the root causes of why more than half of recent graduates look for an alternative career path, and the unacceptable levels of stress-related disease and suicide.

I am encouraged by improvements in management adopted by some practices to ease the load on their employees. However, this must be supplemented with appropriate student selection and education, and post-graduate support.

The Professional Development Phase (PDP) is currently the only standard clinical support in place post-graduation. The PDP does not provide sufficient support and I would propose a more thorough and regulated system as an alternative.

The wheels are in motion to ensure a positive future for this profession, which I care deeply about. If elected to RCVS Council I would endeavour to implement changes necessary to achieve this goal.

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Proposers: Alison Roberts, Martin Whitehead
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from Liverpool in 2008 with an intercalated MSc in Infectious Disease Control, which included the aspects of epidemiology, microbiology, politics and communication relevant to national and international disease control.

I have a good understanding of all veterinary practice sectors: I have worked in mixed, equine and small animal practices in England, Scotland, Wales and New Zealand. I spent the majority of 2016 locuming at the Universities of Edinburgh and Bristol equine departments.

I regularly spend time with One Health projects in India and Africa. This has given me the opportunity to supervise Indian and British veterinary students in a range of procedures from spaying bitches to stomach tubing horses. Implementing a livestock improvement programme in Iraq gave me an even greater appreciation of how the veterinary sector can improve livelihoods worldwide.

As a member of the BVA Policy Committee I am passionate about the important issues affecting the veterinary profession including antimicrobial resistance, bovine TB, animal welfare and the effect of Brexit on our profession.

Outside of work I have hiked the Offa’s Dyke route for veterinary charities. I enjoy mountain biking, trail running, and playing the guitar terribly. Absolutely everyone agrees my jokes are brilliant and hilarious.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
Medical professions, along with scientists and experts, are suffering from a general decline in public trust, largely fuelled by the copious amount of pseudoscientific information and opinion presented online and in the media.

If elected, I would work to ensure that the public understand that the best quality advice regarding all aspects of animal health will come from a veterinary surgeon. Our membership of the RCVS differentiates us from the many so-called alternative or holistic practitioners who offer potentially dangerous advice or delay the seeking of effective treatment. It is commonplace for owners to receive veterinary advice from those without appropriate training or qualifications, one example being people calling themselves ‘equine dentists’ with no accredited training.

I would aim to ensure that the RCVS offers the profession and the public clear guidance about the value of conventional, complementary and alternative therapies following the Standards Committee review of the RCVS’ position on complementary and alternative therapies. In particular, the RCVS needs to clarify where the boundaries of acceptable practice lie for those vets abusing their privileged position as members of our profession to sell therapies and products that have no plausible basis in science.

Having worked in many practices I have observed how practice management can create the difference between a happy, fulfilled veterinary team enjoying their vocation, or a miserable, stressed, discouraged team leading to mental health issues or an increased drop out rate from clinical practice. Working conditions, including clinical support and working hours, is one of the most pressing issues facing new and recent graduates who are already feeling under pressure from increasing client expectations and student debts. If elected, I would work to ensure that the good work started by the Mind Matters Initiative and Vet Futures leads to positive changes in working environments, particularly for recent graduates.

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Proposers: Edyta Handel, 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, mainly in the UK but also in Melbourne and Sydney then Cape Town. In 2004 I completed a degree at London School of Theology, and in 2010 I opened an Oxford JVP practice.

I presently work part-time for a SA practice in Oxford. I’m also studying for an MA in Christian Apologetics and enjoy various outdoor activities such as cycling, mountaineering and kayaking.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I’m gravely concerned about governance of the profession and seek a mandate to illuminate and address the root causes insofar as the issues are relevant to the wider profession. The concerns I allude to are best illustrated by my own story.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
Graduating from Cambridge in 1992 with an intercalated degree in biological anthropology I worked in mixed practice in the Lake District until 1998 and then equine/small animal practice in Lancashire until 2000. I then spent 13 years in the NE of England working in small animal practice including 3 years with the PDSA. From 2004 to 2013 I was with the Vets Now group during which time I completed an executive MBA at Durham University whilst moving into administration and a national leadership role. In January 2014, I joined Michigan State University as Director of the teaching hospital.

I became an elected member of RCVS Council in 2009 and was re-elected in 2013. In 2016 I was elected treasurer of the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society.

I am married with three children. In my spare time, I enjoy cycling and running and having completed my first duathlon in September 2016 hope to enter my first triathlon in the summer of 2017.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
It has been my honour and privilege to serve on RCVS Council for the last eight years. I have been a member of the Standards Committee and the Disciplinary Committee. I was a member of the working party that rewrote the Guide to become the Code of Professional Conduct. Currently I am the only non-specialist on the Specialist Recognition sub-committee.

During my time as an elected Council member there has been a great deal of change including the Legislative Reform Order to separate DC and PIC from Council, the appointment of a CEO, and the new Royal Charter to name a few. I believe I have contributed actively to the decisions associated with such change.

As I stand for re-election there is undoubtedly more change to come. In June last year the UK voted in favour of Brexit. Without a doubt this will affect the College, and has focused our attention on not only our relationship with Europe but also globally. There will be implications for the workforce, education and registration.

Having moved from the private sector to academia, and additionally to a teaching institution in North America, I believe I am uniquely placed through experience and current activities to be able to meaningfully contribute to the discussions and decisions to be made by Council over the next four years.

Despite being resident in Michigan I am passionate about the profession in the UK, the role of the RCVS in regulating and guiding it, and the role it has to play both nationally and internationally.

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement and I hope you will consider me a candidate worthy of your vote, to continue as a Council member for your Royal College that has a vital role to play in the profession globally.

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Proposers: Karen Perry, Richard Stephenson
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
After qualifying from the RVC in 1997 I worked in busy small animal practices in London and Derby for 3½ years. I then worked as a small animal locum in private, charity and referral practices for several years. In 2004 I joined Vets Now as Senior Veterinary Surgeon in Derby, treating private and PDSA emergency cases. I have since held a number of clinical roles within the company, and whilst working in the clinics.

I also currently hold a clinical management position as Assistant Head of Veterinary Standards with responsibility for clinical and professional standards, clinical strategy and clinical training of new and existing staff. Since 2005 I have held an additional support role in IT.

I have a strong passion for ECC and the development of Evidence-based Medicine. I am enrolled on the BSAVA PGCertECC and look forward to developing my clinical role further once my certificate is complete.

I am married, with two children aged five and eight who monopolise my free time, but I also enjoy cycling, walking, rock climbing and bouldering.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
The global and national political climate has forced us to consider the changes that are happening across Europe. Veterinary practices face significant challenges with staffing, and these look likely to become more difficult, with the Brexit decision, as the numbers of European graduates entering the UK market falls. As more new graduates choose to leave the profession early, or to take extended career breaks, the RCVS and the general profession need to look at ways to increase our flexibility, to engage young vets and to enable working parents to juggle home and work life. I am still working in clinical practice and I have been closely involved in the development of young vets through mentoring and real life case discussions for the past 10 years. I am proud to be part of an organisation, that actively supports young vets and promotes female vets to leadership positions.

Evidence-based veterinary medicine is in its infancy but, as a general practitioner, I am proud to have already been able to contribute and help to introduce EBVM to clinics across the UK. I am interested in the role clinical governance plays in the development of clinical practice and the development of significant event reviews and a no blame culture across the profession. What can we learn from our mistakes? What processes can we change? How can we share that knowledge? Not, who is to blame? If veterinary medicine is to continue to progress these are all areas that are vital to our success as a profession.

I have nearly two decades’ experience in practice working in clinical and training roles, as an assistant and as a manager, in general practice and dedicated OOH, with recent graduates and Specialists. I believe I understand the challenges facing the profession, and can offer a fresh perspective.

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Proposers: Malcolm Cobb, Richard Dixon
**CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY**

1991  Blew whistle on junk pet-food fraud and called for Class Actions.
1992  Pandemic of Periodontal Disease.
1993  Preventative Dentistry Book chapter commissioned by Sydney University flagging the professional and legal risks of endorsing junk pet foods.
1994  Feeding vs Nutrition: Have we lost the plot in small animal dietetics?
1994-7 Junk pet-food cult brought four disciplinary actions before NSW Vet Board.
1995  Periodontal disease and leucopenia JSAP
2004  Nominated for ACVCsc Award.

‘Dr Lonsdale has identified a problem, researched the aetiology and the pathogenesis, introduced therapeutic and preventative procedures, and addressed, head on, what he saw to be a moral issue for the profession. In short he has changed a paradigm and guided his profession in a more thoughtful and proper course of action.’
— Dr D I Bryden AM

2014  Most Supportive Vet Award.
Freedom of Information research: Junk pet-food grease contaminating Australian vet schools.

**CANDIDATE MANIFESTO**

The junk pet-food industry/veterinary alliance is at last coming under scrutiny as shown by a recent USA $multi-billion Class Action involving household names. The action alleges conspiracy to defraud over the sale and promotion of prescription pet foods. However prescription diets are but a fraction of a major scam. Let’s be clear, the food/medicine birthright of modified wolves (dogs) and modified desert predators (cats) involves:

- Feeding frenzy — release of endorphins/immune stimulation — therapeutic.
- Physical exercise — release of endorphins/immune stimulation — therapeutic.
- Tooth cleaning — preventative medicine — therapeutic.
- Stimulate gut enzymes/motility — therapeutic.
- Natural food contains intracellular enzymes and is thus pancreas sparing — therapeutic.
- Probiotics, maintenance of the microbiome — therapeutic.
- Substrate conditioning of the colon environment leading to healthy balance of bacteria — therapeutic.
- Behavioural conditioning (avoidance of stress/neurosis) — therapeutic.
- 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.

That any vet denigrates a natural diet and simultaneously insists that pets should be fed artificial junk-junk contravening basic biological principles — beggars belief.

Back in 1991, when commencing the raw meaty bones campaign, I hoped for a soft landing. I hoped for discussion and a chance to revitalise our science and reform our outdated ‘profession’. Please I urge you:

- Go to website for articles, testimonials and videos.
- Visit our practice, engage with us and see the evidence for yourself.
- Recognise that this is not a ‘single issue’.
- Help your clients escape the junk pet-food scam.
- Recognise that our reputation depends on a swift, responsible resolution of the issues.
- Cast your vote signalling your desire for a veterinary community worthy to be called a profession.

Thank you.
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Proposers: Nicola Brooks, Amy Reynolds (nee Taylor)

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from the University of Bristol in 1990.

I worked in mixed practice in Devon from 1990–2, in equine and farm practice in Surrey from 1992–4 and equine practice at The Barn Equine Surgery in Dorset from 1994 to the present day.


I am a member of the BVA and was a committee member of Southern Counties Veterinary Association from 1994 to 2004 serving as president in 2000/01. In 2013 I was the BVA representative on the RCVS Advanced Practitioner (AP) Working Party which established the framework for AP status.

I was an examiner for the RCVS Certificate in Equine Practice from 2004 to 2009, chief examiner in 2009 and served on the RCVS Equine Board.

I am senior vet at Salisbury Racecourse and a member of the Association of Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons (ARVS).

I take a keen interest in farming and run a small sheep flock, an interest I share with my wife who is a farm vet.

I enjoy skiing with friends and family.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
I count myself extremely fortunate to enjoy my work as a veterinary surgeon and am proud to be a member of our profession. My purpose in standing for election to Council is to ensure that as many colleagues as possible feel the same about working as veterinary surgeons. The RCVS plays pivotal roles in regulation of professional conduct and education and these are areas which can impact in a major way on members.

CPD and postgraduate qualifications make a significant difference to our members’ professional lives but must not be an unduly onerous undertaking. Knowledge and skills attained improve confidence, increase job satisfaction and are beneficial to vets and both the animals under our care and their owners. I have been involved in mentoring new graduates and helping with the Professional Development Phase, as an examiner, as the BVA representative on the Advanced Practitioner Working Party and as a member of the RCVS Equine Board. These roles have mainly involved implementing RCVS policy and in seeking election I hope to have the opportunity to play a role in the development of future policy to ensure that CPD works for members.

As our regulator the RCVS has the potential to cause members considerable stress and anxiety when complaints are received from members of the public. It goes without saying that dishonesty and behaviour seriously detrimental to patients or clients cannot be tolerated but increasingly complaints appear to be made maliciously, to avoid payment of fees or in order to pursue agendas unrelated to a member’s fitness to practice. The disciplinary process should be as efficient in identifying and quickly dismissing these cases as it is in pursuing the genuine ones and if elected I would do all I could to ensure this was the case.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated in 2011 from Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, having previously completed a degree in Bioveterinary Science from Liverpool Veterinary School.

I have worked in small animal first opinion practice ever since, and am a Clinical Director at a YourVets clinic in Sheldon, famed for its team ethic and inclusive culture. Over my time the practice has grown from four vets to six, delivering good quality, affordable veterinary care and great service to its clients.

I have completed a CertAVP (aside from synoptic at time of writing) and teach new graduates as part of the CVS new graduate scheme. I also assist Nottingham Vet School annually with their famous business game and careers events, and pro-actively develop and encourage CEMS students taking their first steps into our profession, with my practice’s unique supportive environment. Managing the leap from student to new graduate is one that interests me greatly.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

The RCVS needs new ideas and fresh representation. With 85% of vets employed in first opinion work, it is important that the make-up of the RCVS Council should reflect this. The decisions it makes impact on every one of us within the profession. Given that the Veterinary Surgeons Act is largely based on EU legislation, likely to be lost post-Brexit, it is vital that first opinion front-line practitioners have a voice in the re-writing of legislation that affects us all.

With numerous experienced veterinary surgeons leaving the profession, it is clear a better deal for vets is needed.

The Practice Standards Scheme must be made compulsory, with the top ratings only achievable if a clinic’s own staff anonymously choose to rate it so. This will:
• Encourage employers to look after employees, ensuring a better work-life balance. This will in turn make them more productive.
• Provide a transparent “trip-advisor” style rating for vets and nurses to compare jobs and practices.
• Raise minimum standards across the profession.

I also advocate change to the disciplinary process whereby client complaints are referred initially to an alternative dispute resolution company, rather than directly to the RCVS. This will lead to more appropriate outcomes for vets and clients, and reduce the stress that hangs over vets whilst such processes are ongoing.

If we look after the vets and nurses, vets and nurses will look after the animals.

The fact that I still do the ‘hard yards’ in the consulting room makes me an ideal representative and advocate for first opinion practitioners. I pledge to be an accessible candidate who will bring new ideas and energy to the Council.

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**Proposers:** Susan Rhind, Chris Trower

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**CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY**

Cheryl graduated from Liverpool University in 1988 and after completing a PhD at the Rowett Research Institute worked as a senior lecturer in veterinary pathology at R(D)SVS before moving to the pharmaceutical industry. During this time she worked as a pathologist but also gained management qualifications and managed a large technical team, before returning again to an academic role at RVC.

She has always maintained strong academic links, with particular interests in transferring technical skills between industry and academia, ensuring the welfare of experimental animals and encouraging vets to explore alternative career options.

She currently works part time for MRC Harwell and for Abbey Veterinary Services/NationWide Laboratories as a diagnostic pathologist. She is an RCVS recognised specialist in Veterinary Pathology and holds visiting Chairs at RVC and Surrey vet schools.

Cheryl has extensive experience of serving on and chairing professional committees. She is the immediate past Chair of the Royal College of Pathologists specialty advisory committee for veterinary pathology. She was part of the stakeholder group for the Vet Futures project and is on the RCVS Fellowship Credentials Panel.

In her spare time she keeps bees, runs and attempts to sail.

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**CANDIDATE MANIFESTO**

In a time of accelerating external change the profession is facing challenges which require new ideas and rapid responses. Response to change and innovation in any profession benefits from diversity. Increasing diversity means firstly looking at our student intake aiming to attract a better balance of applicants that reflect our society today. This is one of the aims of the Vet Futures project which also recognises that different career options are important for individuals and the profession. We need to make sure that the early work on this project comes to fruition with genuine actions that help prepare graduates and established vets for different roles, ensuring that all career paths are equally valued and that career paths are signposted.

Mental health remains a pressing issue for our profession and the Mind Matters project is making progress here in raising awareness of the problem. Satisfying, progressive and properly rewarded career pathways are important for mental health but we also need to ensure the whole profession accepts that a good work-life balance is essential and not just desirable. Vets need to be supported through their early post graduation years but also as they develop greater responsibilities later in their career; this is essential to encouraging a more representative population in leadership positions. RCVS Council should lead the way in promoting leadership role models within the profession.

Having worked in universities, research institutes, pharmaceutical industry and diagnostic pathology practice as a lecturer, mentor, careers advisor, researcher and manager I believe I have a range of skills and experience to contribute to, and provoke, debate on crucial areas of interest to the profession. Additionally both through my professional and committee work I have a track record of delivering on actions.
Dr Huw Stacey
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Proposers: Martina Eyre-Brook, Karlien Heyrman

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
After graduating from the Royal Veterinary College in 2000, I spent 10 years in first opinion practice, beginning in rural North Devon, where I performed a mix of small animal, farm, equine and zoo work. During the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001 I was seconded to MAFF (as it was then) in a TVI role.

After four years, I transitioned into small animal practice, concurrently undertaking a three-year postgraduate diploma in companion animal behaviour counselling at the University of Southampton. The many elements of this diverse course included human psychology, welfare, ethics, anthrozoology and law. It has broadened my thinking and built upon my veterinary education.

In 2011, after a short time in industry, I joined Companion Care in the newly created role of Commercial Manager. I now hold the position of Director of Clinical Services for the Pets at Home Vet Group (of which Companion Care is one element).

My wife Donna is also a vet, and outside of work we are kept very busy by our two young boys and many animals. I am a keen surfer and triathlete, and have recently started coaching youth triathlon at a local club.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
A general practitioner at heart, I am a passionate advocate of the veterinary profession and relish the opportunity to make a contribution to its leadership and future direction. A firm believer in the Vet Futures vision and ambitions, last year I was privileged enough to be a member of the Vet Futures Action Group.

I have contributed to the RCVS Standards Committee consultation on out-of-hours cover, and I am currently a member of the VN Futures Action Group, BVA Veterinary Policy Committee and the Veterinary Major Employers Group. I am a clinical advisor to the Vet Client Mediation Service trial, which I feel is a vital component of maintaining the future credibility of our profession within the public eye.

I am pleased that the importance of the welfare of vets — for so long the champions of animal welfare — is becoming increasingly well recognised. We do, however, have much more to do in this area in order to build a resilient, healthy, happy workforce.

We need to see a cultural revolution within our profession: to have a bright future, we must develop a positive, emotionally intelligent and supportive mindset, striving for the highest clinical standards, while recognising human fallibility and viewing it as an opportunity for learning and improvement, not for blame and guilt. In a culture where leadership is nurtured, nurses will be empowered and respected, and will play a vital role in enhancing the level of care that our patients receive.

I believe we should embrace the concept of evidence-based medicine in deciding what is appropriate to offer — as well as what not to offer — however this ideal should always be caveated with the pragmatism necessary for the real world: when insufficient good quality evidence exists, clinical judgement and experience must prevail.
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Proposers: Hannah Jordan, Jessica Kidd

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
Following a degree in Agricultural and Environmental Science from Newcastle University, I worked for a year in Zambia before returning to study for the veterinary degree at Glasgow University. On graduating in 1999 I worked in mixed practice in Herefordshire with Peter Jinman where I was exposed to the rigours of agricultural practice in an area of family farms. I subsequently moved to West Berkshire to a predominantly equine practice. Twelve years ago I purchased a small equine and companion animal practice which now employs five vets and five support staff. Shortly after graduating I served on the RCVS Education Strategy Steering Group which laid the foundations of the PDP.

Despite a busy practice and family life with two young sons I have made regular charity trips to Africa and India. Seeing the suffering of the third world at first hand has made me all the more appreciative of the opportunities available to us in our society.

Currently living near Newbury I chair the Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission. I have been on RCVS Council since 2009 and am currently very honoured to be its President.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
Since 2009 I have been honoured to serve on RCVS Council and for the last six months as President. I’ve spent that time on the Public Affairs, Education, Examination Appeals and Planning & Resources Committees, Specialisation Working Party, Brexit Taskforce and the Operational Board.

I am as determined as ever that there is a role for practitioners on the regulatory body of our great profession. Being a vet in a busy practice gives me a perspective that helps ensure that regulation from the RCVS is relevant and appropriate. The very high standards that the RCVS sets, and that we live by, are what makes us the professionals that we are. If re-elected I will continue to work towards ensuring that those in our professions are the happy, healthy, rewarded vets and nurses that best serve society and its animals.

We need to ensure that the expectations of those that aspire to become vets and nurses are met by the realities of life five years after qualifying. Working towards a learning culture, whilst challenging, will play a significant role in retaining vets and nurses. We all make mistakes. Rather than being punished we should learn and grow from them.

Finally I hope to continue the work I’ve started on our international profile, to ensure that, post-Brexit, our professions continue to be able to make the outstanding contribution to society that they do today. I am determined that the principles that led to the development of our professions by protecting animals from the harmful actions of untrained, incompetent individuals are still relevant today. In seeking to modernise our underpinning Legislation we should ensure that animals and the public continue to have the protection of efficiently regulated Veterinary Professions with impeccably high standards.

I humbly seek your vote.
CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Having graduated from the RVC in 1991, I spent four years working in mixed practice in Oxfordshire. I then wished to develop my companion animal skills, so joined a hospital practice in Plymouth, gaining my Veterinary Dermatology certificate in 1997. In 1998 I moved to Salisbury, started a family and I continued to enjoy a wide variety of both clinical and managerial work in a nine vet, multi-centred, companion animal practice. I became a Partner in 2002 and Director in 2011. In addition to being involved in private practice, I have spent many years working with the Dogs’ Trust and with Vets Now on their Advisory Board. I am a member of the BVA, BSAVA and have been a member of SPVS and the BVDSG.

Away from professional life, I enjoy quality time with my family, I keep physically and mentally fit by walking and mountain-biking, I enjoy socialising with friends, holidaying, theatre and reading.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

The veterinary profession has evolved remarkably over the last 20 years and I believe that the RCVS needs to continue to embrace and harness this evolution!

Changes to the demographic in the veterinary workplace, practice ownership, out-of-hours provision and expectations of the wider community have had positive and negative impacts upon the profession. Evidence-based medicine is improving clinical outcomes greatly, but brings with it an enhanced need to effectively communicate and balance costs with clients’ expectations. Recruitment supply/demand issues affect the profession: we need to embrace the modern-day drive for better work-life balance and match it with the need to continue providing exemplary veterinary service. Alongside these issues, the pace of technological developments and our access to, and thirst for knowledge will drive the future. These are just some of the evolutionary challenges facing our profession.

However, I believe that, whilst we embrace change, this must not be at the expense of our core values of excellent animal care and empathetic collaboration/communication between veterinary practitioners and clients. To this end, I am passionate about educating veterinary personnel of the future to ensure they are provided with a toolkit of these crucial, often overlooked, central values, alongside expected key clinical competencies.

Whilst undergoing evolution, I feel it has become difficult for veterinary staff to find time/motivation to engage with regulatory bodies such as the RCVS. There is now an opportunity, I believe, to work rigorously with practising professionals, to harness this currently rather silent majority and so help the College provide modern governance that listens to, respects and actively encourages the views of stakeholders.

I would welcome the opportunity to help deliver our core, key values, to forge productive professional relationships and to promote the RCVS as a proactive, inclusive and relevant partner alongside practitioners.

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Proposers: Timothy Nuttall, Timothy Scase

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from Liverpool in 1977 and spent a period in a large mixed practice in Leicester before returning to Liverpool as a Lecturer in Veterinary Pathology. After five years I moved to Bloxham Laboratories (eventually to become Axiom Laboratories) to set up a diagnostic histopathology unit. In 1985 I started Abbey Veterinary Services which has subsequently grown to employ currently six pathologists. We have until recently been a fully independent histology and cytology laboratory but have recently joined Nationwide Group of laboratories.

I have a specialist interest in dermatopathology and have been a very long standing member of both the ESVD and BVDSG. I have been a board member and treasurer of both of these organisations during which time both dramatically expanded and became truly international organisations.

I am a diplomate of the ECVP and have contributed to the governing of that college.

I have given numerous talks to clinicians and pathologists and have contributed to many publications.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
The vast majority of members of the RCVS are in veterinary practice and the activities of the Royal College are rightly very much directed towards veterinary practice. However, there is still a substantial minority of members who are not in clinical practice and this includes diagnostic pathologists as well as toxicology pathologists, the state veterinary service and members working in the regulatory fields. These areas, especially diagnostic pathology, are very important for clinicians in practice but have little or no direct representation on Council.

In modern veterinary practice diagnostic pathologists have become an integral part of your diagnostic team. In order to maintain and develop this input into your day-to-day clinical practice it is essential that we have some direct representation on Council particularly in this time of major challenges, and major changes which the Council will have to deal with in the near future. These will include changes associated with Brexit, especially employment issues, changes to RCVS governance and the changes to CPD.

I have experience in veterinary practice, academia, extensive experience in diagnostic pathology and organising and developing specialist clinical interest societies – BVDSG and ESVD. As a diagnostic pathologist I have a very close association with clinical practice and am fully aware of the issues that are of concern I am also readily available should you wish to discuss any issue relevant to RCVS.

I would ask you to save one of your votes for me in order to be able to represent pathologists so that we can continue to provide clinicians with the service that they require and also to enable me to represent clinicians as well as non-clinical groups on Council.
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Proposers: John Fishwick, Ben Jacklin

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY
I graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 2000. After a role in first opinion farm and equine practice in Somerset, I returned to the RVC to complete a PhD. Alongside my studies I was able to expand my range of experience with small animal locum work. An internship in Kentucky and residency in equine surgery in up-state New York followed, before a move to Switzerland, where I completed a year as equine emergency clinician at a university equine hospital. I returned to the UK to take up a role as an equine surgeon at the RVC and over the course of seven very enjoyable years I developed an interest in professional regulation, which led to my nomination for Council. Most recently, I was tempted out of academia by the exciting opportunity to take on the role of clinical director of a small animal and equine practice in North Yorkshire.

During my first term on Council, I served on the Education and Standards Committees (the latter including as vice chair), the Specialist Recognition Subcommittee, and chaired a working party to review the Professional Development Phase (PDP) Competences.

I am currently chair of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons Examination Committee.

CANDIDATE MANIFESTO
After four rewarding years on Council working alongside the capable staff at the RCVS I have no reservations about being nominated for election again. I offer the balanced perspective of someone with experience in a range of clinical and non-clinical sectors, including large and small animal species, government work and academia. I remain passionate about the veterinary professions and I am highly motivated to help ensure a regulatory environment that is fit for purpose.

In the face of unsettled external circumstances the RCVS must continue to take clear positions on what is expected of veterinary professionals and clearly communicate that standard. That means understanding and defining what it means to be a veterinarian in the 21st century, across the breadth of settings in which we work and across the full timeline of a career from pre-vet to retirement. It also necessitates an involvement in the conversation around the issues that face members on a daily basis, even where they might not at first glance fall within the remit of a regulator or Royal College.

My own professional development has given me valuable insights into the disruptive potential of modern technology. We must carefully appraise and, where appropriate, embrace such technology in the interests of hitherto unimagined opportunities for patient care and welfare of both individuals and populations, but we must not allow this to dilute the meaning of ‘animals under our care’.

Similarly, changing business practices and sociocultural shifts are challenging many of the perceived notions on which our professions have been founded. While our visceral reactions may initially be to resist substantial changes in working practices to protect the status quo, the RCVS has an obligation to actively scan the horizon and be open to working in partnership with any organisation with the capacity to influence veterinary standards.
I graduated in 2004 from Bristol and started private practice in Yorkshire and then the Southwest. I also helped at the Lancaster Students’ Seminar and eventually served as SPVS Honorary Secretary. My wonderful practice and SPVS colleagues kept me proud of our profession, aware of our sacrifices, and passionate about our need to support one another. I then moved to charity practice and undertook some research, which presented different challenges. I also served on BVA Council (and chaired the Ethics and Welfare Committee), which raised my awareness of the political context of veterinary work, the relationship between BVA and RCVS, and the support we need to give ourselves as a profession.

I took on my managerial role in 2012. This role is part of the Executive Board, driving strategy, achieving budgetary savings and setting our guidance and “expectations”. The RSPCA is both a significant veterinary employer and a high value veterinary client across thousands of practices, caring for thousands of animals. During this time, I have also helped on BSAVA Scientific Committee, the Equine Disease Coalition and our Pig Scientific and Technical Advisory Group, and completed a book on Animal Welfare in Veterinary Practice, focusing on resolving welfare-client-business tensions.

My interest in standing has come from being on the BVA/RCVS Vet Futures Action Group. That project gives us a golden chance to “shape our destiny” as a profession so I felt I should maintain the effort to help make our profession what we want it to be.

Every member should be healthy, supported and confident in what we do. We should each have promising career options open to us in thriving businesses and cooperative teams, balanced by enjoyable lives outside work. We should be the key driving force to improve animal health and welfare in the future, and an essential part of local and global economic, environmental and social concerns. We should be valued by society, and respected by clients, paraprofessionals and human medics — as we deserve.

We need to find out what members believe would help them feel confident in practice, supported by colleagues — including RCVS colleagues. This means empowering us each to be confident in our professional judgements in how to resolve the tensions faced everyday, particularly when owners are absent or fall short of the ideal. My current role has focused on taking in colleagues’ views and trying to meet their expressed need. Years of involvement on committees (and consultations with clients) have also taught me how to be both forthright and tactful and to ensures the best relationships between HQ staff and those on the “front line”.

I would hope I could bring to the RCVS everything I have learnt in my work and professional roles: about listening, about working together, and about enthusiasm.
Background information

• RCVS Council is made up of 42 members: 24 elected veterinary surgeon members; 14 members appointed by UK universities offering veterinary degrees; and four Privy Council-appointed members.

• Every year six elected RCVS Council members retire at RCVS Day — our Annual General Meeting — though they are eligible for re-election.

• In 2017, 16 veterinary surgeons are contesting six places on RCVS Council. Three of these are existing RCVS Council members eligible for re-election while 13 candidates are not currently on RCVS Council.

• The full biographies and manifestos of each candidate can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetvote17 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, 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 in May 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 7 July 2017 at the Royal Institute of British Architects.

• The RCVS Council election is run independently by 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 28 April 2017.

Vote online* at www.ersvotes.com/vetvote17

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

*You will need the two-part security code printed on your ballot paper and sent by email

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