College calls for certainty for EU vets

Survey shows that EU vets feel unsure of future

Following the publication of the results of our survey with non-UK EU graduate veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses earlier this month, the College has called upon the Government to end the uncertainty felt by many European vets by guaranteeing their rights to live and work in the United Kingdom.

Earlier this year we commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to send a confidential survey to 5,572 veterinary surgeons who had graduated from a vet school in the European Union (excluding the UK) and who are registered as veterinary surgeons in this country, as well as around 100 non-UK EU-trained veterinary nurses.

The survey was sent as the Government was preparing to enact Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to instigate the official negotiations on the UK’s exit from the EU, and was intended to gauge the impact of last year’s vote to leave the EU on European practitioners. The survey therefore asked a wide range of questions about how these individuals felt the vote had affected them, how they felt about their future working in the UK veterinary sector and how they felt the College had dealt with the issue of Brexit.

Some 3,078 people (including 19 veterinary nurses) responded to the survey – a response rate of 55.3%.

Here are some of the key findings:

- **Demographics**: The gender split for responses was 60% female and 40% male, while the mean average age was 36. Some 87% of respondents were working full-time.

- **Country of qualification**: The largest group of respondents qualified in Spain (22%), with Italy (14%), Poland (10%), Romania (9%), Portugal (7%), Germany (6%) and the Republic of Ireland (6%) following. The remaining 26% qualified in 18 different countries, each of which accounted for fewer than 5% of EU registrants. Although these figures relate to country of qualification and not the nationality of the individuals, in 91% of cases these were the same.

- **Area of work**: Of those responding the majority (78%) worked in clinical practice. Of the 603 who do not work in clinical practice 38% worked for the Food Standards Agency, 21% worked for the Animal and Plant Health Agency and 18% worked in higher education.

- **Continuing to work in the UK**: Some 73% of respondents said they would like to continue to work in the UK. However, 41% of respondents said they were not optimistic about their future, 67% were finding the uncertainty about their future difficult, 64% felt less welcome, 44% felt fearful about the future and 40% felt they had reduced job security. Furthermore, 40% of respondents said they were more likely to leave, with 18% actively looking for work outside the UK. Some 79% are awaiting the outcome of the Brexit negotiations before deciding on what to do.

- **Impact on veterinary sector**: 88% of respondents believed that the UK would have a shortage of veterinary surgeons if non-UK EU national vets were no longer welcome in the country. Some 77% also believed that EU-graduate vets would also be less likely to apply to join the UK Register.

- **Experiences of prejudice**: 16% of respondents said they had personally experienced prejudice at work following the vote to leave the EU, with 22% saying they had observed it.

- **Support from the College**: 74% of respondents said they were happy with the support and advice provided by the RCVS so far.

*Story continues on page 2*
New Royal role for CEO

Nick Stace to move on after five years at helm

Our Chief Executive, Nick Stace, will be leaving the College at the end of summer, having accepted a new role as UK Chief Executive at The Prince’s Trust.

The charity “creates life-changing opportunities” for those aged 11–30 and Nick has long-held a passion for making a difference to young lives. He has set up three charities for young people; with learning disabilities; who want to campaign to change the world; and who want to break down the barriers to enjoying nature and the outdoors.

Nick has led the RCVS since September 2012 and has taken the College through a period of great change and modernisation. During his tenure, developments at the College include a new Royal Charter, major governance reform, improved regulation of veterinary nurses, the instigation of Vet Futures, the introduction of the alternative dispute resolution service, significant evolution within the Practice Standards Scheme, the refocusing of RCVS Trust into RCVS Knowledge, the launch of Mind Matters, and the recognition of the College as a Great Place to Work.

“It has been a great privilege to be CEO of the College and to work with such amazing staff, such a progressive Council and such a decent and caring profession.”

Nick Stace said: “It has been a great privilege to be CEO of the College and to work with such amazing staff, such a progressive Council and such a decent and caring profession. It is no surprise to me that vets and vet nurses are among the most trusted professionals in this country, and in my view this is due to their professionalism and to the excellence of the Royal College in maintaining and advancing standards. I hope I have played my part in helping the College and the profession navigate through a period of great change and preparation for significant change to come.

College calls for certainty for EU vets (continued)

Commenting on the survey results, Chris Tufnell, President of the RCVS, said: “This survey makes the strongest possible case that the Government must act fast to reassure our EU colleagues in practices, universities and industry that they are welcome to stay in the UK.

“Beyond this commitment we will also be lobbying the Government so that, after we leave the EU, suitably-qualified vets from overseas are prioritised for UK work visas or equivalent, particularly if they are working in public health and the meat industry.

“I also recently wrote to Michael Gove, the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, outlining our position and our Brexit Principles. It seems our message has already hit home as Mr Gove was heard making encouraging comments about the positive role of EU veterinary surgeons in the UK food industry in a recent interview on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme.

“On a personal note, I am very sorry to see that a significant proportion of respondents have experienced prejudice at work. This is simply not acceptable and we, as a regulator, have been conscious that ‘anti-foreigner’ rhetoric in the country at large could have an effect on hard-working and talented members of our profession, which is why we raised the matter in our letter to the Prime Minister last year.”

We will publish the findings of interviews with a sample of non-UK EU-graduated veterinary surgeons working in the UK in late summer. Meanwhile, over the next two years, IES will also be carrying out two further pieces of research that will track the opinions and intentions of non-UK EU-graduated veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses over time as Brexit policies are formed and the future status of non-UK nationals made clearer.

The College has also been busy talking to European partners through the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education around our Brexit Principles and potential post-Brexit arrangements around vet school recognition and immigration controls.

The unique situation of Northern Ireland, as the only part of the UK that shares a land border with an EU country, was also discussed at a recent meeting with stakeholders in Belfast where we heard about some of the challenges that Brexit might present.

To view the IES report and the College’s Brexit Principles in full, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/brexit

College welcomes new Treasurer

Kit Sturgess appointed

At its June meeting RCVS Council appointed Dr Christopher (Kit) Sturgess as the new Treasurer.

As Treasurer he will be responsible for maintaining an overview of the College’s financial affairs, ensuring our financial viability and making sure proper records and procedures are maintained.

Kit replaces Dr Amanda Boag who was elected Junior Vice-President at the RCVS Council meeting in March.

He has been an RCVS Council member since 2013 and also currently sits on the Education Committee.

He currently works three days a week seeing clinical cases in both referral and primary care practices and spends the other two days writing, lecturing and pursuing other projects including the RCVS Council and teaching at the local primary school.
RCVS and VN Councils election results

Best turnout ever for both elections

In this year’s RCVS Council and VN Council elections a record proportion of both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses cast a vote for their preferred candidates, the majority of whom will take their seats for the first time.

For veterinary surgeons, 22.8% (or 6,785) of those eligible to vote did so compared to 15.6% (4,403) last year. For veterinary nurses, 14.5% (or 2,092) of those eligible to vote did so compared to 10.9% (1,435) of the profession last year. The turnout for both elections was the highest ever with the previous record for an RCVS Council election being 18.8% turnout and the previous record for a VN Council election being 12.8% turnout.

“It is still a relatively small proportion of the profession voting in these elections and so will continue to think of new ways to engage with the professions.”

For the six available places on RCVS Council, five new members were elected and one existing member elected for four-year terms. The five new members are, in order of number of votes, Caroline Allen (3,073 votes), Sarah Brown (2,799 votes), Danny Chambers (2,634 votes), Cheryl Scudamore (2,087 votes) and Martin Peaty (1,909 votes). Current RCVS President Chris Tufnell was re-elected with 2,430 votes.

For the two places available on VN Council one new member was elected and one existing member re-elected for four-year terms. Andrea Jeffery was re-elected with 1,293 votes, while Susan Howarth was elected with 1,064 votes. Eleanor Ferguson, our Registrar, commented: “Thank you also to all those who took the time to ask questions of our candidates and cast a vote. This year we made a concerted attempt to make it even easier for the electorate to vote, with secure links to the voting websites sent by email and regular email reminders to those who hadn’t yet voted. The fact that both record numbers and proportions of the professions voted this year is testament to our efforts to further increase engagement with veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

“However, while we welcome these significant increases, we recognise that it is still a relatively small proportion of the profession voting in these elections and so will continue to think of new ways to engage with the professions not just at election time, but across our many activities.”

All the successful candidates will take up their positions at RCVS Day (see page 12) where the formal declaration of both election results will also take place.

Each candidate in both elections was invited to produce a short video in which they answered questions put to them by fellow members of the professions and which appeared on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos). The videos provided by the RCVS Council candidates received 4,661 views while those provided by the VN Council candidates received 377 views, compared to 1,169 and 779 last year, respectively.

The 2017 RCVS and VN Council elections were run on our behalf by Electoral Reform Services Ltd.

Learning to learn

Reducing blame; becoming open to learning

During March over 7,300 veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and practice managers completed our survey that aimed to establish the extent to which a learning culture exists in the veterinary profession – a great response rate, a big thank you to all of those who took part.

The work flows from our Strategic Plan 2017–19, in which the move towards a culture that has a ‘greater focus on learning and personal development’ is one of our five key themes (www.rcvs.org.uk/strategy).

The survey asked questions around trust and accountability within practice and at a profession-wide level, learning from mistakes and the impact of our complaints-handling process. The independent consultancy that ran the survey for us, Open Minds, is now carrying out some qualitative interviews with a view to putting together a report that will be considered by our Council in due course and will form the foundation of an action plan.

Meanwhile, Catherine Oxtoby of the Veterinary Defence Society (pictured, left) and our Deputy CEO, Lizzie Lockett (right), spoke jointly at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in Birmingham in April on the theme ‘Blame and shame: lost learning in the veterinary profession.’ In the session, they considered the importance of reducing blame culture and how this could be achieved on a practical basis.

Fee increase approved

5% increase in 2018

At its June meeting RCVS Council approved a 5% increase in the annual renewal fee for veterinary surgeons for 2018–19.

In introducing the recommendation to increase the current fee level Treasurer Amanda Boag told Council members that the increase was required because the College was entering a period of uncertainty with the potential impact of Brexit on membership fees and increasing inflation. The need to increase fees in future years had already been identified in 2016 in light of these uncertainties as well as a number of different projects identified in the Strategic Plan including further digitisation of its core processes and improvements to the College estate.

The increase will mean the annual renewal fee for UK-practising vets increases from £314 to £330. The discussion on annual renewal fees for veterinary nurses will take place at meetings of VN Council and RCVS Council later this year.
College introduces three new awards

We are proud this year to announce three new Awards to recognise veterinary leadership and excellence: the International Award, the Impact Award, and the Inspiration Award.

These three awards join the existing three honours that reward and recognise those who go above and beyond in their pursuit of animal welfare: the Queen’s Medal, specific to veterinary surgeons; the Golden Jubilee Award for veterinary nurses; and Honorary Associateships, for non-veterinary professionals.

These new Awards are designed to support one of the strands of the RCVS Strategy Plan 2017–2019 to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.

The Inspiration Award is for up to two veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses who have demonstrated their ability to inspire and enthuse others consistently in their career.

The Impact Award would be for up to two veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses who have made a considerable impact that has affected the profession at large, animal health or welfare, or public health.

The International Award is for up to two individuals who have worked internationally from either within or outside the UK, and have made an outstanding contribution on issues that are in line with the RCVS mission statement. They can be veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, or lay people.

The inaugural International Award will be given to Christophe Buhot (pictured), former President of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), at this year’s RCVS Day (see page 12) in recognition of his work to raise the profile of the profession in the institutions of the European Union and across the continent as a whole.

“These new Awards are designed to support one of the strands of the RCVS Strategy Plan 2017–2019 to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart.”

There is also a new Innovation Prize that will be open to all innovations that contribute towards the delivery of animal health and welfare or One Health in terms of novel ideas around processes, service delivery or business structures. There must be at least one veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse on the team, but other members can be lay people. More details will be released soon on how to apply.

For further details about the Queen’s Medal, Honorary Associateship, the Inspiration Award, Impact Award, or International Award, please contact Peris Dean, Executive Secretary, on p.dean@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0761.

For enquiries about the Golden Jubilee Award, please contact Annette Amato, Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing, on a.amato@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0713.

Nominations for all awards will open in July. All nominations will be considered by the Operational Board and then by RCVS Council at its November 2017 meeting. Nominators and award-winners will be notified in November and the results will be made public at Council next March. The honours will be bestowed at RCVS Day in July 2018.

Recognising leadership and innovation

Fond farewells

Outgoing RCVS Council members

At this year’s RCVS Day (see page 12) three former Presidents will retire from RCVS Council: Dr Bradley Viner, Mr Peter Jinman and Dr Jerry Davies.

Bradley Viner has been an RCVS Council Member since 2005, serving as RCVS President from 2015–2016 and an active Operational Board member. As President he oversaw the launch of many initiatives, including: the launch of the new Practice Standards Scheme, the Ethics Review Panel and a new alternative dispute resolution trial.

Peter Jinman has also been on RCVS Council since 2005, serving as RCVS President from 2010–2011 as well as being an active member of the Examination Appeals Committee and Registration Appeals Committee. During his time as President, the University of Nottingham’s veterinary degree was approved, as well a new Strategic Plan that aimed to confirm the College as an effective regulator.

Jerry Davies has been on RCVS Council from 2001, serving as RCVS President from 2011–2012 as well as on the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), PIC and Disciplinary Committee Liaison, and the Statutory Membership Examination Board. As President he oversaw the establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee and the appointment of Nick Stace.

Also leaving RCVS Council this year are Dr Thomas Witte and Dr Chris Gray who were thanked for their contributions at the June meeting of RCVS Council and given scrolls.

Chris Gray (pictured), has been on RCVS Council as an elected member since 2009. During his time as a Council member he was on the Advisory Committee (now Standards Committee), the Planning and Resources Committee, the Disciplinary Committee (prior to the legislative reform order that changed the Committee’s composition) and the Specialist Recognition Subcommittee.

Tom Witte joined RCVS Council as an elected member in 2013. During this time he served on the Standards Committee, Education Committee and was Vice-Chair of the Examination Appeals Committee.

The College thanks them all for their years of service.
Reaching the summit

On Wednesday 20 September 2017 we will be holding our inaugural Innovation Symposium at the Warwick Business School campus in the Shard near London Bridge. This event will bring together thought-leaders from the profession to talk about its future, those involved in innovative veterinary technologies and business models to highlight the innovations that will have a profound impact on the profession, and those to lead discussions on how these can be regulated.

This is just one of the actions resulting from the ‘Leadership and Innovation’ strand in our Strategic Plan 2017-2019. We are planning to launch an online leadership hub as well as a free massive open online course (MOOC) to help vets and vet nurses develop their leadership skills, and earlier in the year we also ran a consultation on the use of telemedicine in practice.

Earlier this year we also conducted a consultation on telemedicine and how the College can get the balance right between regulating technology while encouraging innovation. The consultation was well received with 1,230 responses from members of the profession, 229 responses from animal owners and 15 responses from veterinary organisations and stakeholders. We are currently in the process of analysing results with the aim of producing a report and recommendations.

Council considers CAM

At its meeting in June, Council considered a statement to articulate its position with respect to complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) and therapies. The discussion was the latest in a process that was triggered by changes to views about some such therapies within the wider human health sector, and also petitions from members of the profession calling for a strong position against such therapies.

The College already has supporting guidance to the Code of Professional Conduct that considers the provision of appropriate and adequate veterinary care (see chapter two). However, it was felt by the Standards Committee that this did not go far enough and that an additional statement – to be released by the Operational Board as a Royal College position as opposed to an addition to the Code – would be helpful.

Although the proposed statement was broadly welcomed by Council members, some changes were recommended to add further clarity. The original statement can be read online as part of the Council bundle (www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/15-june-2017). The updated statement will be considered by Council at its meeting on 28 September.

Truly a force for good

If there has been an overarching theme during my almost five years as CEO of the College it is that of increased engagement with both the profession and the public.

Although a few may still say we sit in our ivory tower making decisions remote to the realities of day-to-day practice, increasingly the profession and the public have seen the College as a force for good: an organisation that tries to balance the interests of the profession, the public and animal health and welfare for the good of all.

Sometimes this has involved difficult and challenging conversations about our deficiencies as an organisation – whether perceived or real – but this is crucial to getting an understanding of where improvements need to be made.

It has paid dividends as we have seen record numbers of people responding to consultations, voting in elections and undertaking surveys.

Just to give you a few examples over my tenure:

• for the first-rate regulator project back in 2012/13 around one in five members of the profession responded to our consultation;
• over 11,000 people responded to our consultation on the use of ‘Doctor’ as a courtesy title
• a record 22.8% of veterinary surgeons and 14.5% of veterinary nurses voted in this year’s RCVS Council and VN Council elections respectively – a very encouraging result
• this year’s Schedule 3 consultation on how we could potentially change the legislation to bolster the role of veterinary nurse received almost 12,000 responses
• thousands of members of the profession and the public got involved in our Vet Futures and VN Futures projects through attending roadshow meetings, taking part in surveys, telephone interviews and so on.

On a more international level, we recently asked non-UK EU graduated vets and nurses for their views on Brexit, their future plans for remaining the UK, and how they felt they had been treated since the vote to leave in June 2016. Though we had already established a Brexit Taskforce, written to the Prime Minister, and co-hosted a Brexit Roundtable with the British Veterinary Association, we were missing vital information from those ‘on the ground’.

There was an over 50% response rate to our survey, and preliminary analysis shows there is considerable uncertainty around future working rights. We have therefore called upon the Prime Minister to make this a priority in the upcoming Brexit negotiations (see page 1). We have also been working closely with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), and have seen four other European countries adopt Vet Futures-style programmes. The FVE themselves have even adapted their strategic plan to accommodate recommendations from Vet Futures.

This is all a strong reminder that while we may be leaving the European Union, we are not leaving Europe, and we will continue to engage with professionals across the continent and indeed all over the world.

Meanwhile, our investment in the Professional Conduct Department and the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS) is beginning to demonstrate faster turnarounds in terms of concerns-handling, and, on a more internal note, we have been recognised as one of the top 50 great places to work in the UK by the Great Place to Work Foundation for the third year running.

I think what all of this, taken cumulatively, shows is that there is a real appetite for people to take their futures in their own hands and use their voices and their ideas to change the world around them rather than blindly accepting the status quo. Whether it’s staff at the College asking for (and getting I might add!) a new coffee machine at work, the veterinary nursing profession coming out in force to ask for their title to be protected or veterinary surgeons telling us about their frustrations with the speed of our disciplinary processes. I think that, on a national scale, the recent increase in the youth vote for the General Election has shown that people are desperate for control over their future.

So while I leave the College with some sadness, I do so with very little regret, knowing that I leave the College in a good place – a first-rate regulator with dedicated staff, a committed Council and many projects and initiatives that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of both animals and those who treat them. As I leave I also think that the relationship between the College and the professions is better than it’s ever been – there will, of course, be some tension, but I believe that many members of the profession recognise it as a force for good.

I wish my successor, whoever he or she may be, the best of luck and my congratulations, for the RCVS has truly been a great place to work.
Lead on!

Developing everyday leaders

Later this year we will be launching a wide-ranging veterinary leadership initiative to support the development of leadership skills within all branches of the veterinary team and at all levels of seniority and career stages.

The overall aim of the project will be to move away from the idea that leadership is for veterinary surgeons of a certain age and at a certain level of their career and a certain position in their practice. What we want to promote is the idea that, whether they realise it or not, all vets and vet nurses are leaders and face leadership challenges on a daily basis. As such, we want to promote the importance of self-reflection and the development of leadership skills as a key aspect of their continuing professional development (CPD).

“We want to promote the importance of self-reflection and the development of leadership skills.”

In preparation for our leadership project we will be undertaking an exercise to determine how well-embedded concepts such as everyday leadership are in the profession. We will be looking to understand what resources and courses are currently available and why vets and vet nurses do or do not seek to access leadership training. One ambition in the coming 12 months is for the College to develop a free massive open online course (or MOOC) to help vets and vet nurses start on their leadership development journey.

Allied to this, we will also be launching an online leadership hub which will give member of the profession the opportunity to start a dialogue around the importance of veterinary leadership as well as hosting resources and signposting members to courses and materials that will support leadership development.

Goodbye RCVS News!

Electronic-only in future

The RCVS News you have in your hands may well become a collectors’ item – so don’t throw it away just yet!

This is the last hard copy issue of RCVS News that you will receive as we have decided to switch to solely electronic publication. We have been running RCVS e-News alongside the thrice-yearly paper copy for many years, but the time has come to reduce the duplication.

The hard copy has been timed to fit with our public Council meeting schedule (March, June and November) but, with the advent of our new governance arrangements meaning that over the coming couple of years we will be increasing our

College saddened by the death of Past-President

Tributes paid to Lord Soulsby

We were very sad to hear of the death of Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior, a truly exceptional individual with an unparalleled commitment to bringing together human and veterinary science.

As well as serving as President of the College from 1984-85 he was also President of the Royal Society of Medicine from 1998-2000, the first ever veterinary surgeon to be elected to that position, and a founding Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

He was the recipient of numerous honorary degrees and prizes including Honorary Fellowship of the College and, at RCVS Day in 2015, of the Queen’s Medal, the highest award that the RCVS can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon.

Chris Tufnell, current President of the RCVS, commented: “He gave an outstanding service to the profession, to veterinary science and to animal welfare but was known for his endearing personality as much as his intellect. He will be missed by many colleagues in the veterinary world but his legacy will live on through inspiring veterinary surgeons from all walks of life to work more closely with other healthcare and medical professionals. Our sympathies are with his family and friends.”

Alan Turing law

Pardon applications accepted

This year is the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales under the Sexual Offences Act 1967 and, in recognition of this, the Government recently passed the ‘Alan Turing law’ which allows men who were convicted of acts that are no longer illegal under current legislation to apply for a pardon.

In light of this decision the College will also be offering pardons, including posthumously, for any members of the RCVS who were sanctioned by our disciplinary process for acts that are no longer illegal.

Please contact our Professional Conduct Department on profcon@rcvs.org.uk to discuss further.

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Ambitious Action Plans

An update on Vet and VN Futures

In 2014 we joined with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) to launch Vet Futures – a project designed to create a blueprint for the future of the veterinary profession. After a year of research we published ‘Vet Futures: Taking charge of our future’, setting out a number of ambitions for the veterinary surgeon of 2030 as well as recommending the creation of a separate VN Futures project.

In July 2016 both Futures teams launched their Action Plans, detailing how to turn the recommendations from the original report into reality. It is now a year on and both teams have made some great progress. Below are some of the main highlights, as well as a look to plans for the future.

VET FUTURES

Vet Futures

On 6 June, Vet Futures held a kick-off meeting for its Graduate Outcomes project that drew together strands from the RCVS Strategic Plan, the Vet Futures Action Plan, the Education Committee’s Strategic Plan and the Veterinary Schools Council Strategic Plan.

The day explored a number of subjects around diversity within the profession, in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic background and gender.

“Attendees also discussed diversity within the profession, in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic background and gender.”

BVA is also heading up activity on the UK One Health Coordination Group, which will meet for the first time in July, bringing together representatives from the veterinary, medical and environmental professions to provide a focus for One Health and One Welfare activity in the UK, and delivering the actions in the BVA animal welfare strategy.

One of the key actions has been to establish the Veterinary Animal Welfare Coalition, which aims to coordinate public communications on key animal welfare issues to amplify messages about the five welfare needs. The Coalition has launched the five welfare needs logo and undertaken PR and social media activity throughout national pet month. BVA is also working up plans to deliver an online careers hub as a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in, studying for, or progressing their veterinary career.

VN Futures

The VN Futures project isolated six ambitions to achieve by 2020, with the shorter time-scale reflecting the faster rate of both turnover and training for veterinary nurses. The VN Futures Action Group then created a number of development groups focusing on each of these ambitions and creating specific actions to ensure their completion.

Some of these groups have already sprung into action, such as the One Health Working Party, which has collaborated with the Royal College of Nursing on smoking cessation. The Careers Progression Group has also already met twice and is planning four regional events, the first of which will take place at Hartpury College in Gloucester on 11 July, and will focus on veterinary nurses as managers. For details about how to attend this event, please contact Claire O’Leary from the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Department on c.oleary@rcvs.org.uk.

The Schedule 3 Working Party has also been particularly active. On 2 May it sent out a consultation to all registered veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, asking for their thoughts on, and experiences of, the role of the veterinary nurse. About 35% of veterinary nurses and 20% of veterinary surgeons responded, feeding into a wider analysis of whether Schedule 3, and so the role of the veterinary nurse, should be reformed.

European scope

On a more international scale Vet Futures has also been working closely with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and sharing the Vet Futures model, a process that started in May 2016. We are pleased to see that Vet Futures is now being embraced across Europe, with the FVE adopting aspects of it into their own strategy plan, and France, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark developing similar projects.

Some of the European associations, such as the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations and the European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry, have now added Vet Futures Europe to their strategy.

Innovative agenda

On Wednesday 20 September 2017 we will be holding an Innovation Symposium at the Warwick Business School campus in the Shard near London Bridge. This event will bring together thought-leaders from the profession to talk about its future, those involved in innovative veterinary technologies and business models to highlight the innovations that will have a profound impact on the profession, and those to lead discussions on how these can be regulated.

The BVA has also been busy, kicking off a collaborative research project on workforce issues with psychologists at the University of Exeter. Researchers are currently undertaking a literature review and analysing existing data in preparation for further research into some of the major workforce trends and challenges.

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Exemption orders and associates

Council agrees direction of travel

At the June meeting of RCVS Council Dr Bradley Viner, Chair of the Exemptions Orders and Associates Working Party, presented a paper to the members with recommendations on how the current exemptions regime could be rationalised and made clearer.

Exemption orders are pieces of secondary legislation that allow laypeople to carry out acts of veterinary surgery in certain circumstances. So, for example, there is an exemption order in place to allow appropriately-trained laypeople to carry out artificial insemination of mares.

Last year the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) set the College the task of looking at these exemption orders to determine how they could be improved and to develop a framework that would ensure consistency across the board.

“These provisions allow the College to regulate new classes of associate in addition to veterinary nurses.”

The Working Party also developed a set of criteria to be applied when assessing applications for associate status with the College in line with provisions contained within the 2015 Royal Charter. In essence, these provisions allow the College to regulate new classes of associate in addition to veterinary nurses.

Two models of association were also put forward – one that involves the RCVS accrediting an organisation that would, in turn, be responsible for registration, education/training, professional standards and so on with the College having regulatory oversight. The other model would be full regulation in which we would regulate individual members of the profession (as is the case with veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses) including registration, education and training standards and professional conduct. Council agreed that it would give further consideration to these two models.

Make your declarations

Key for finishing registration process

Although the window for veterinary surgeons to pay their annual renewal fee has now closed – with some 339 vets being removed from the Register for non-payment at the beginning of June – there are still plenty of people who have not fully completed the registration process.

In order for the registration process to be complete veterinary surgeons must not only pay their fee but also confirm their registration address, confirm their compliance with our continuing professional development (CPD) requirement of 105 hours over a three-year period and declare any convictions, cautions and/or adverse findings.

Not completing the CPD declaration process may result in your CPD records being requested as part of our annual auditing process. If you do not meet the requirement, or do not respond to a request for your records, your case may go to the Preliminary Investigation Committee and, in the case of continued non-compliance or failure to reply, may ultimately go before a Disciplinary Committee.

Those who have not yet completed this process can do so on the ‘My Account’ area at www.rcvs.org.uk/login. If you log in we would also like to remind you to check that your listed contact details, including postal and email addresses, are correct, as we still often get emails bouncing back and correspondence returned to us because the address is old or invalid.

More information on our disclosure process for convictions, cautions and/or adverse findings can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions.

Information about our CPD requirements for veterinary surgeons can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/cpd

Time for a change?

Considering new regulatory legislation

In April we established a Legislation Working Party to consider whether new legislation to regulate the profession may be appropriate with the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, and many remaining deficiencies in existing legislation.

The Working Party will consider a number of changes. Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA), for example, veterinary nurses still lack statutory regulation and protection of title and there is no underpinning for our CPD requirements and Specialist/Advanced Practitioner status.

Schedule 3
The Working Party will also consider reform of Schedule 3 of the VSA, which allows veterinary surgeons to delegate certain non-surgical tasks to veterinary nurses.

In May we surveyed all eligible vets and VNs asking for their opinions on Schedule 3, of which 21.3% of veterinary surgeons and 34.9% of veterinary nurses responded. The full report will be published this year.

Governance
The Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs is also still moving forward with a legislative reform order to reduce the number of Council members but increase the frequency Council meets. This is expected to be approved by Parliament later this year.

Disclosing with confidence

Client confidentiality advice updated

Following a letter from a Child Protection Agency regarding a fatal incident involving a dog, the Standards Committee was asked to consider the College’s position on the reporting of dangerous dogs by veterinary professionals. The Committee was specifically asked whether there should be an obligation on veterinary professionals to report dangerous or aggressive dogs to the relevant authorities.

When the Committee met in April, it agreed that irrespective of the breed, if a dog that is clearly dangerous is brought into a veterinary practice, reporting to the authorities is encouraged, and if necessary, client confidentiality may be breached in order to do this. However, a mandatory reporting scheme was not considered to be appropriate. It was agreed that, in order to provide reassurance to the profession, the existing supporting guidance should be amended to include further examples of where a breach of client confidentiality could be justified in the public interest, including in order to report a dangerous dog.

The supporting guidance on client confidentiality (Chapter 14) has now been updated to include the following examples of where a breach of confidentiality may be justified in the public interest: when there are concerns in relation to a dangerous dog; where child or domestic abuse is suspected; and where disclosure to an authority would be in the interest of safeguarding the public.

For further information about the new guidance, please contact the Standards and Advice Team on 020 7202 0789.
A rewarding ceremony

PSS Awards at BSAVA Congress

At BSAVA Congress on 6 April we held a reception about the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), open to all delegates who wanted to find out a little bit more about the Scheme, its optional awards and how being part of it can benefit veterinary practices.

During the course of the event Jacqui Molyneux, RCVS Council member and Chair of the Practice Standards Group that oversees the Scheme, announced that over 60% of UK veterinary practices were now Scheme members and that this was set to increase.

Attendees also received ‘top tips’ from Pam Mosedale, Lead PSS Assessor, on how to achieve an award, and heard from two award-winning practices about the awards assessment process. One of those speaking was Louise Rayment-Dyble from All Creatures Healthcare Ltd in Norfolk. She posed the question of why practices should bother applying for a PSS award.

She said: “One criticism of the PSS is that the general public is not that aware of it and that if you spoke to Joe Bloggs on the street they would assume that all veterinary practices have to be accredited. We felt that with the new awards it speaks more to the general public as people can identify and relate to them because they cover areas such as customer care.

“There was a lot to do to meet the award modules but it is done logically so that, with a bit of time, you can work through it.”

“The process itself was also more simple than we were expecting. There was a lot to do to meet the award modules but it is done logically so that, with a bit of time, you can work through it.”

RCVS President Chris Tufnell then congratulated the 33 practices receiving awards at the ceremony.

Fees advice

Standards agrees new guidance

The Standards Committee has approved an update and refresh of the supporting guidance on fees. The changes to Chapter 9 (“Practice information, fees and animal insurance”) place more emphasis on giving clear information about fees, so that clients are in a position to give informed consent and are not surprised by the bill at the end of their animal’s care.

In agreeing the changes, the Committee had regard to a number of fee-related themes giving rise to a small but steady number of concerns against veterinary professionals. It also recognised that the supporting guidance could do more to help members of the profession manage client expectations in relation to fees.

The revised guidance reiterates that veterinary surgeons should be open and honest about fees, and should provide clear and easy-to-understand information about how they are calculated and what it is that clients are being charged for. A detailed new section on estimates has been inserted, along with further guidance on discounts to supplement guidance added in 2016. The need to comply with consumer protection legislation and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) requirements has also been highlighted.

In relation to estimates, the updated guidance stipulates that veterinary surgeons should offer clients a realistic initial estimate, based on the best available information at the time, of the anticipated cost of veterinary treatment. The initial estimate may be for a defined period of time if appropriate (eg where it is difficult to predict what the cost will be beyond the initial stage). If treatment extends beyond the period covered, or it becomes evident that an estimate is likely to be exceeded, there should be further discussion with the client about additional costs and further consent should be obtained. If a client declines an estimate, this should be recorded. In accordance with the existing guidance, it is recommended that any estimate should be included on the consent form.

In relation to discounts, the expanded guidance provides that they should be clearly recorded and transparent for all parties liable for payment of an account, and retrospective discounts should not be applied for the benefit of one party only.

As a result of the update the supporting guidance on fees is now consolidated in one place. Chapter 9 now covers all fee related matters, some of which had previously only been discussed at other points of the guidance, such as consent in relation to fees, advertising of fees, fees for prescriptions and fees for out-of-hours emergency services.

The changes agreed by Standards Committee were approved by RCVS Council in June, and are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/fees.

For further information about the new guidance, please contact our Standards and Advice Team on 020 7202 0789.

Ethics review trial extension

Extra year and equine/farm animal research considered

Following the popularity of its initial one-year trial, our Ethics Review Panel is to be extended for a further twelve months and its remit expanded to include consideration of equine and farm animal research proposals.

The aim of the Panel – which has veterinary, veterinary nurse and lay representation – is to facilitate access to ethical review for those wishing to undertake research outside of a university or industry context and who may not otherwise have access to a mechanism of ethics review.

The Panel, which is chaired by Professor David Morton, continues to accept submissions from practitioners wishing to undertake research involving cats and dogs, and will be accepting those from equine and farm animal practitioners from early August 2017.

Detailed information about the submission process, including guidance notes for applicants and an application form, can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/ethics

Any questions should be directed to Beth Jinks, Standards & Advisory Officer, at ethics@rcvs.org.uk

ADVICE/REGISTRATION/PRACTICE STANDARDS
RCVS NEWS – JUNE 2017
Continuing to audit

Non-compliance still an issue

In 2016 we requested the records of 1,398 veterinary surgeons and 629 veterinary nurses as part of our annual audits of continuing professional development (CPD). Under the Codes of Professional Conduct veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are expected to undertake 105 hours and 45 hours of CPD over a three year period respectively and these audits are undertaken to gauge levels of compliance.

In the veterinary surgeons’ audit we contacted: anyone who did not confirm their CPD-compliance for two consecutive years; a random sample of self-certified ‘CPD-compliant’ vets; those who submitted a return in 2015 but had not reached the requirement; all those who did not respond to the previous year’s CPD audit; any new graduates who did not respond to any of our communications about the Professional Development Phase (PDP); and any that selected said they were not compliant as part of the 2016 annual renewal.

“Vets that had been on the Register less than six years had the highest percentage of CPD compliance.”

Some 22% of the veterinary surgeons that responded were non-compliant with the CPD requirement of 105 hours of over a three-year period. Of these 40% did not give any reason for their non-compliance, but the top three listed reasons were: that no CPD records were kept (14%); illness (8%); and family commitments (6%).

Vets that had been on the Register less than six years had the highest percentage of CPD compliance, followed by vets that had been on the register between seven and 12 years.

In the 2016 audit of veterinary nurses the following were contacted: a random sample of 8% of RVNs; anyone who submitted a return in 2015 but had not reached the requirement; RVNs who did not respond to the previous year’s CPD audit; and any that selected said they were not compliant as part of the 2015 annual renewal.

Some 27% of the veterinary nurses who responded to the audit were not compliant with the CPD requirements of 45 hours over three years.

Some 28% of those did not give any reason for non-compliance, but the top three reasons of those listed were: maternity leave (32%); family commitments (14%); and illness (8%). Almost 44% of non-responders are between 25 and 34 and 44% are between 35 and 45 years old. CPD compliance was highest for the oldest group of veterinary nurses (79%), with non-compliance highest for the group that has been on the Register between 31 and 49 years.

The 2017 CPD audit requests for veterinary nurses was sent out on the 6 June. The next CPD audit of veterinary surgeons will take place in September 2017.

Changes to VN training requirements

College recognises ‘blended learning’

VN Education Committee recently agreed a change to our policy on the amount of learning hours that student veterinary nurses are expected to undertake on a face-to-face basis and instead will look at taking a more outcomes-based approach.

Under our previous requirements veterinary nurse training courses were expected to feature at least 700 hours of face-to-face learning for student VNIs. However, it was increasingly recognised that this was too prescriptive and didn’t recognise that increasingly more learning is being done remotely, for example, via webinar, Skype and through online assessment tools.

Research conducted by Lily Lipman, our VN Qualifications Manager, looked at approaches taken by other licence to practise qualifications and found that many aspects were delivered online. Therefore the Committee approved the changes as it was felt it better recognised that different students had different learning needs and preferences.

Lily commented: “The decision was that we should be focusing on the outcomes achieved by veterinary nursing students attending the courses, rather than specifying what percentage of the course should be delivered face-to-face or online and so on.

“Online provision will be subject to the same quality assurance measures as face-to-face learning, and it is imperative that standards of veterinary nurse education remain high. Centres and universities are therefore advised to monitor student learning, feedback and attendance with online learning elements, and ensure these measures are equally as auditable as traditional classroom teaching.”

If you have any questions about the change in requirements, please contact Lily on l.lipman@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0756. More information about the changes can be found in the latest edition of VN Education available to download at www.rcvs.org.uk/publications

Review of Advanced Practitioner requirements

Working Group established

An Advanced Practitioner Working Group has been established to review the criteria for attaining Advanced Practitioner status for veterinary surgeons.

Advanced Practitioner status was established in 2014 as a way of acknowledging those veterinary surgeons who had attained the requisite skills and experience in a designated field of veterinary practice such as emergency and critical care, equine orthopaedics and small animal surgery, to name a few.

Those who have attained Advanced Practitioner status are required to reapply for it every five years, and so the Working Group, chaired by Tom Witte (pictured), has been established to look at the current criteria ahead of the first cohort reapplying for the status in 2019.

The Group will meet three times over this year and will examine feedback from the Advanced Practitioner Panel (which is responsible for determining applications for the status) and applicants themselves to ensure the criteria is fit for purpose. The Group will report its conclusions and any suggested changes back to Education Committee in January 2018.

Further information about the current eligibility criteria and application process for Advanced Practitioner status can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced
Joint PDP research project established

Reviewing how we help graduates into practice life

We have recently joined forces with the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) to conduct a research project to evaluate the impact of the Professional Development Phase (PDP) on veterinary graduates.

The PDP is a period of structured self-assessment, reflection and development designed to assist veterinary graduates in the transition from life as a veterinary student to clinical practice.

During the PDP (which should normally last no more than three years after the graduate enters clinical practice) the graduates are supported by a Postgraduate Dean and are expected to keep a record of their clinical cases against a list of clinical skills and procedures as well as reflect on how they are progressing in relation to the PDP Competences.

The research project will be conducted across the whole profession and will seek to better understand the positive and negative experiences of veterinary graduates and their employers.

The aims are to:

• gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by new graduates and their employers in the transition to practice;
• evaluate the impact of the PDP on the development of clinical and non-clinical skills;
• understand the support needed by employers of new graduates to help them complete the PDP and how both BSAVA and RCVS could provide this;
• explore how reflection is understood by employers and used by new graduates during the PDP; and,
• understand the impact of reflection as perceived by employers and graduates.

Following a tendering process we have now appointed the Work Psychology Group (www.workpsychologygroup.com), to undertake the research. The team that will be conducting the research also includes Professor Susan Rhind, from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, and Professor Liz Mossop of the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham.

“We recognise that there is some frustration and uncertainty with the process and that not everyone finds it helpful.”

Christine Warman, our Director of Education, said: “Since its launch in 2007 the PDP has had some success in helping graduates in the transition into practice life, but we recognise that there is some frustration and uncertainty with the process and that not everyone finds it helpful.

“So we are very pleased to be joining forces with the BSAVA on this project and hope it will help us get a better sense of how both graduates and employers feel about the PDP where obstacles to learning and development exist, potential gaps in support provision and common areas of confusion, anxiety and concern.”

Sheldon Middleton, BSAVA Honorary Treasurer and board sponsor of the BSAVA’s PDP Resource, said: “BSAVA recognised the gap in provision of support material for the professional skills element of the PDP and created the PDP Resource Bank to plug this gap for our members.

“We worked with the RCVS to match the resources to the structure of the PDP but also recognised that there was a need for support for employers of new graduates as well.

“The PDP Resource Bank is growing and has a dedicated editorial board reviewing material for inclusion. This research project will allow us to tailor our resource further and ensure our members are able to access the support they need.”

The research will be conducted across the whole veterinary profession through focus groups and telephone interviews and will include graduates, employers, vet school representatives, Postgraduate Deans, and BSAVA and British Veterinary Association (BVA) representatives.

Surveys have also been sent by email to graduates currently undertaking the PDP as well as practices employing graduates.

The results of the research will ultimately be made publicly available across the profession, together with recommendations for the further development of the PDP.

If you are a recent graduate or employer who wishes to take part in a focus group about the PDP then you should contact Charlotte Flaxman from the Work Psychology Group on c.flaxman@workpsychologygroup.com.

More information about the PDP, including a video about its benefits, is available at www.rcvs.org.uk/pdp

Accreditations update

Recent and upcoming visitations

A visitation team from the College recently undertook a visit to the University of Surrey’s School of Veterinary Medicine as part of its process of monitoring the standard of its veterinary degree as the first cohort of students enter their third year. We are now working constructively with the university in advance of the final visit in 2019 which takes place shortly before the first cohort of students finish their degree.

Following a visitation to St. George’s University in Grenada in November 2016, the Education Committee did not accredit their veterinary degree as it has not yet implemented plans to integrate extra-mural studies into its current curriculum. The University is welcome to submit another application for accreditation once this has been addressed.

A team from the College will be visiting the University of Nottingham’s School of Veterinary Medicine and Science with the Australian Veterinary Boards Council and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education in November 2017. Amanda Boag, who will then be RCVS Junior Vice-President, will chair the visit, which will determine whether to confirm the school’s veterinary degree accreditation for a further seven years.

Tracking Stat Exam progress

Stat Exam review moves to tender stage

At its May meeting the Education Committee received an update on the ongoing review of the Statutory Membership Examination, taken by all those who wish to register with us but who hold a veterinary degree that is not recognised by us.

This review is designed to evaluate both the design and delivery of the examination, and was commissioned by the Statutory Membership Examination Board, the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee and Education Committee.

The Education Committee agreed upon three major proposals: for new draft syllabus documents which better reflect Day-one Competences to be presented to interested veterinary schools; to consider an additional tool requiring candidates to assess written information; and to agree wording for a revised English language testing requirement so that those applicants whose first language is English can apply for an exemption from sitting this test.

The syllabus documents will be presented to interested veterinary schools as part of the tender process, aiming towards delivering the new examination in 2018.

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The global profession, career diversity and innovation on the agenda

RCVS Day 2017

Global reach, encouraging diverse career paths and fostering veterinary innovation will be the themes of this year’s Royal College Day – the College’s Annual General Meeting and awards ceremony – at the Royal Institute of British Architects on Friday 7 July.

The guest speaker at this year’s event will be Dr Ebony Escalona (pictured with her horse Albert) from the equine veterinary charity Brooke – Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, with a talk entitled ‘Jump outside the veterinary box: widening our horizon’. In this she will be drawing upon her own experiences at the charity to examine the contribution that the UK veterinary profession can make in the field of One Health across the world, how encouraging career diversification can outweigh career disillusionment and the role that innovation can play in education and in supporting working horses, donkeys and mules in some of the world’s poorest communities.

“It will be a fascinating talk which will make us think about how we as professionals can make a contribution to animal and human health on a world stage.”

The occasion will also be the last official function of our current President Chris Tufnell who will give a speech before he hands over the reins to Professor Stephen May who will be invested as RCVS President for 2017–18.

Chris Tufnell said: “I would like to thank Ebony for agreeing to be this year’s guest speaker, her charity does some very important work across the world to improve the health of working animals and thus improve the lives of the people that depend on them.

“I am sure it will be a fascinating talk which will make us think about how we as professionals can make a contribution to animal and human health on a world stage, how we can think more positively about our careers and how we can adapt to new technology and change.”

Royal College Day starts at 10am with our Annual General Meeting, at which the results of the RCVS Council and Veterinary Nurses Council elections (see page 3) will be formally declared and the newly elected members of both Councils will start their four-year terms. This will also be an opportunity to say thank you and farewell to retiring members of the respective Councils.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the RCVS Annual Report and Financial Statements 2016 will also be presented, will be followed with an awards ceremony at 11am recognising those who have gone above and beyond in their dedication to the veterinary profession and related fields.

Former RCVS President and Council member Dr Barry Johnson will receive the Queen’s Medal, the highest honour we can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon, for his long and distinguished career in clinical practice, education and international work.

Former VN Council Chair Kathy Kissick will receive the Golden Jubilee Award, the highest honour we can bestow upon a veterinary nurse, in recognition of her dedication to advancing veterinary nurse training and education throughout the course of her career.

Two Honorary Associateships will also be bestowed over the course of the day. Heather Armstrong, Director of the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust, will be receiving an Honorary Associateship in recognition of her dedication to animal health and welfare. Duncan Maskell, Marks & Spencer Professor of Farm Animal Health, Food Science and Food Safety at the University of Cambridge, has been recognised for his research into infectious diseases. A number of RCVS Fellowships and Diplomas will also be presented.

Finally, Christophe Buhot, former President of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), will receive our inaugural International Award in recognition of his championing the Vet Futures project in FVE, his native France and across other European countries.

The formal part of the day is set to conclude at 12.45pm, followed by lunch and drinks. Those wishing to attend should contact Emma Lockley, Senior Events Officer, on e.lockley@rcvs.org.uk to reserve free tickets. Please note that tickets are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Chris adds: “I would like to see as many members as possible at Royal College Day – it is always a brilliant occasion and I, for one, have always gone away from it feeling inspired and invigorated about what we do.”

This year a separate awards ceremony will be taking place at ZSL London Zoo on Tuesday 27 June for veterinary nurses who are receiving their Diplomas in Advanced Veterinary Nursing.

Programme

10.00 Annual General Meeting
1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
3. Questions
4. Council elections: new members and retirements
5. Date of next AGM: Friday, 6 July 2018

Meeting of the RCVS Council
6. Meeting to elect President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer

-------------------- Coffee break --------------------

11.00 Presentation of Awards
7. Presentation of the Queen’s Medal
8. Presentation of Veterinary Nursing Golden Jubilee Award
9. Presentation of RCVS International Award
10. Presentation of Honorary Associateships
11. Presentation of Honorary Fellowships by Election
12. Presentation of Fellowships
13. Presentation of Diplomas
14. Presentation of books to the RCVS Knowledge Library from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association
15. Chief Executive & Secretary’s address
16. President’s address
17. Talk from Dr Ebony Escalona ‘Jump outside the veterinary box: widening our horizon’
18. Investiture of new President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer
19. New President’s remarks

12.45 Lunch

15.00 End
Mind Matters round up

Since the last Mind Matters report, in the March issue of RCVS News, we have been busy! Here’s a round-up of our recent activities to help address mental health issues and promote wellbeing within the veterinary team.

Right from the earliest discussions of the Mind Matters Initiative Taskforce, the key role that managers play in supporting those with mental health issues in the veterinary team has been well recognised. We have been equally cognisant of the stress that can develop within managers themselves if they are given inadequate support and training on mental health issues. So, we were delighted to launch a series of one-day courses specifically for managers, jointly with Taskforce members, the Veterinary Practice Management Association (VPMA).

Subsidised by both Mind Matters and the VPMA to make it as accessible as possible, the course costs £80 for VPMA members and £120 for others. It is run for us by Connecting with People, specialists in workplace mental health.

The course is for anyone with management responsibility, not just practice managers, and covers basic mental health awareness, the legal position, employment regulations, reasonable adjustments, developing wellbeing action plans and helping colleagues return to work.

We have already run four days, in Swindon, Neath, Hazlewood and Canterbury, with excellent feedback, including: “Very accessible, especially to those without much experience of the topic,” “I feel I now know what to do… and what not to do,” “I learned too many things to count,” and “the workbook was full of practical information and easy-to-understand tools”.

Future events are as follows:

- 23 June – Edinburgh
- 27 June – Bradbury, Co Durham
- 4 July – Kilmington, Devon
- 6 July – Brentwood, Essex
- 10 July – Bromsgrove, Worcestershire
- 12 July – Warrington, Cheshire
- 14 July – Romsey, Hampshire
- 19 July – Newmarket, Suffolk

For more details, and to register, please visit our Event Brite page: rcsvsmindmatters.eventbrite.com

Webinarzzzzzz

It’s not often that a webinar tries to send you to sleep, but our latest series with the Webinar Vet aims to do just that. The six ‘Choosing and Understanding Sleep’ webinars, which started on 7 June 2017 and take place between 8pm and 9pm every Wednesday evening until 12 July, are presented by mental health and wellbeing consultant Dr Mike Scanlan (pictured). They aim to help veterinary professionals understand sleep and worry less about it, and feel less tired and anxious about the effect sleep problems may have on their lives.

Although the course has now started, it’s not too late to sign up – you can catch up via the recorded webinars: www.thewebinarvet.com/sleep-series-2017

It’s good to talk

We have continued to provide talks over the last few months at a variety of events, including on resilience and blame culture at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress, to staff and students at the University of Liverpool and the Royal Veterinary College, in the form of a webinar for VPMA members and at the launch of the University of Nottingham’s ‘Look out for each other’ wellbeing campaign.

We are happy to provide content about Mind Matters and mental health for your event, campaign or publication, or put you in touch with recommended speakers and trainers to meet your needs. Please contact Lizzie on lizzie@vetmindmatters.org to chat about your requirements.

American friends

Finally, it’s exciting to report that we are in conversation with colleagues at the American Veterinary Medical Association about adding a global dimension to the Mind Matters brand on some joint projects. Mental health issues are not faced by the UK veterinary team in isolation, and it makes sense to join forces to share best practice and experience around what is, essentially, a global challenge. We will keep you posted on our developments.

To read the stories, visit www.vetmindmatters.org/#AndMe or follow us on Twitter, where we use the hashtag #AndMe. If you would like to contribute to the campaign, and help others to seek help, please email Lizzie Lockett on lizzie@vetmindmatters.org.
Over the sea we went

Regional Question Time in Belfast

As we were holding our June meeting of RCVS Council in Belfast this year we thought we would also take the opportunity to hold one of our regular Regional Question Times in the city as well as meeting with local stakeholders.

The Question Time took place at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast on Tuesday 13 June, with around 30 delegates from across the province attending, including Northern Ireland’s Chief Veterinary Officer Robert Huey, with a wide range of questions from the audience.

The first discussion concerned the shortage of veterinary nurses in Northern Ireland. Topics discussed around this included the possibility of introducing advanced veterinary nursing practitioners and how the skills and training of veterinary nurses could be better used in practice. The second topic discussed was around the definition of ‘under veterinary care’, repeat prescriptions for large animals and antimicrobial resistance.

Brexit was also a hot topic with a discussion around the shortage of veterinary surgeons in Northern Ireland and how Brexit, and its potential effects on European veterinary surgeons being able to come here for work, might impact the shortage. Solutions discussed included enhancing the role of veterinary nurses to undertake more routine veterinary work and encouraging people to stay in the profession through better mental health support.

“The first discussion concerned the shortage of veterinary nurses in Northern Ireland.”

Other issues discussed included reducing the length of the concerns investigation process and cracking down on unqualified practitioners.

The following day there was a further meeting with key stakeholders in Northern Ireland including representatives from the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practising in Northern Ireland, Vet NI and the North of Ireland Veterinary Association. Much of the discussion was around the potential impact, and opportunities, of Brexit on agriculture and the veterinary sector in Northern Ireland, particularly taking into account the fact that it is the only part of the UK to share a land border with an EU country.

Design overhaul for website

New-look site focuses on improving user experience

Although it feels to us like only yesterday that we launched our current website, it is actually approaching its seventh birthday and, in some respects at least, is starting to show its age.

We are therefore currently overhauling the design, structure and navigation of our whole family of sites (Professionals, Animal Owners, Find a Vet and RCVS Knowledge) in a concerted effort to make it faster and easier for everyone to find what they are looking for.

Some of the main improvements are:

• A new level of navigation at the very top of every page so you can move between sites easily (similar to the BBC website).

• All homepages to have greater focus on the content and services that you want to see and use straight away, including dynamic content from ‘external’ sites like Mind Matters and Vet/VN Futures.

• New fly-out menus and improved search tools to help you find what you want more quickly and easily.

• Page layouts more in line with current best practice, to make reading easier and navigation simpler.

• A ‘mobile first’ approach to design to ensure the website works optimally on all mobile devices, as well as desktop.

We have already carried out some user testing on the new-look site and, once it has been launched in the coming weeks, we would appreciate any further feedback you might have, via communications@rcvs.org.uk.
Bringing vet practices to life

**College exhibiting at BBC Countryfile Live**

We will once again be exhibiting at BBC Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace this year, from 3 to 6 August 2017. Events like these are great opportunities to engage with the public and raise awareness about public-facing projects as the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and the Find a Vet search tool.

This year the focus will be on Find a Vet and communication different roles in veterinary practice. The ‘Find a Vet’ search tool was updated last year and now allows users to search for a veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse or veterinary practice all in one place.

The tool also includes new features such as displaying a practice’s visiting information (including opening hours and car parking); enabling users to ‘get directions’ via Google Maps; advertising a practice’s PSS accreditations and awards; and returning individual profile pages for veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

We were at the very first BBC Countryfile Live last year and handed out 1,500 ‘Find a Vet’ canvas bags containing Find a Vet and PSS leaflets and merchandise, and persuaded over 200 people to take part in our themed games and competitions.

We’ll be there all four days at Stand D22 opposite the Dog Arena. For information about buying tickets please visit the BBC Countryfile Live website: www.countryfilelive.com

**Webinar diary dates**

**This year’s RCVS webinars**

This year we have a whole range of webinars, hosted by the Webinar Vet, designed to provide information for both the profession and the public.

Over the past few months we’ve run three free webinars which are now available from the ‘Archive’ section of the Webinar Vet website: ‘The art of delegation – Schedule 3 consultation’, ‘Veterinary nurses – how can they help you and your pet’, and ‘Knowing your Code: tips from the RCVS Standards & Advice team’.

We also have a number of upcoming webinars to keep an eye out for; the first, on 4 July, is a public-facing webinar hosted by RCVS Council member Mandisa Greene (pictured) and Helen Devine, the Head Nurse at Charter Veterinary Surgeons in Staffordshire. It will cover all the different roles in a veterinary practice, and help animal owners to understand the qualifications and specialities available to veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

The next, on 5 September, will be a Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) ‘myth-buster’ run by PSS Lead Assessor Pam Mosedale and Practice Standards Group Chair Jacqui Molyneux.

Nick Bacon, Chair of the RCVS Fellowship Board, will be hosting one on 13 September on the new Fellowship initiative, and RCVS Director of Leadership and Innovation, Anthony Roberts, will be running one on 19 September on changes to the College’s governance structure.

There will be more running throughout the year, so make sure to check our website and Webinar Vet for updates.

**Where the money went**

**RCVS Annual Report published**

We have published our Annual Report and Financial Statements 2016 – a summary of everything we did, and everything we spent, last year.

The Report covers how we met the final year of our Strategic Plan 2014–2016 including the launch of the new Fellowship initiative, the start of the new alternative dispute resolution trial (the Veterinary Client Mediation Service) and our new Ethics Review Panel to look at practice-based clinical research.

The publication also details how ongoing projects, such as Vet and VN Futures and the Mind Matters Initiative, continued to go from strength to strength, with the launch of the Vet Futures Action Plan and the VN Futures Report in July, for example.

The Annual Report is available to download from our website at www.rcvs.org.uk/publications. For a hard copy contact Andrew Grainger on a.grainger@rcvs.org.uk
Since the last report to Council there have been seven Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings on 22 February 2017, 8 March 2017, 22 March 2017, 12 April 2017, 27 April 2017, 10 May 2017 and 24 May 2017.

The total number of new cases considered by the Committee was 49. Of the cases, 12 were closed; nine cases were closed with advice being issued to the veterinary surgeon; seven cases were held open; 13 were referred for further investigation; six cases were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken; and two were referred to the Disciplinary Committee. In total the PIC is investigating 27 ongoing cases including cases referred to solicitors, visits and health cases.

Health and Performance Protocol
There are 11 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

There are three veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol. One of these is cases is currently suspended following a conviction (the conviction is being appealed) and a disqualification order that prevents interaction with animals.

Professional Conduct Department
In the period 14 February 2017 to 25 May 2017 some 178 concerns were raised with the Professional Conduct Department. This compares with 281 raised in the same period last year. During the same period 274 concerns investigations were closed. Approximately 78% were closed by the Case Examiner Groups because there was no arguable case against the veterinary surgeon; 9% were closed or held open by PIC; 7% were closed because permission to copy the concerns form to the veterinary surgeon was not received; 4% were closed after a period of being held open; 1% were closed following a review; and 1% were closed by the Disciplinary Committee.

Veterinary Investigators
During the same period the Veterinary Investigators and the Chief Investigator carried out 11 announced visits, two announced visits and two health-related visits. During the visits complainants, veterinary staff, third-party witnesses and the respondent veterinary surgeons were interviewed.

Concerns procedure
Between October 2016 and December 2016 an average of 52% of concerns raised with the College were closed or referred to PIC within four months, the key performance indicator for this stage. In the same period PIC reached a decision within nine months (the key performance indicator for this stage) in 62% of cases.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)
In October 2016 our new ADR trial, known as the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS), commenced. The VCMS is run on our behalf by Nockolds Solicitors and its aim is to resolve, through mediation, those disputes between animal owners and veterinary surgeons that need resolution but do not meet our threshold of professional misconduct. As a result of this new trial, changes have been made to the concerns investigation process with the introduction of an enquiries stage as a preliminary step before the formal concerns process is engaged. This stage means that anyone considering or wishing to raise a concern is provided with information on matters that fall within the College’s remit and those that could be more appropriately addressed by VCMS. If unsure they are prompted to call the RCVS to discuss their concern or to complete an enquiries form that are then considered by Case Managers to determine whether it is a matter of professional conduct to be investigated by the College or something that falls within the VCMS remit.

The full reports are available at www.rcvs.org.uk

Mrs Anne Mary Mullen

Inquiry concerning: failing to have professional indemnity insurance or equivalent arrangements

DC decision: suspension from the Register for two months

Registration status: removed from the Register on 26 May 2017 and will be restored on 26 July 2017

On 20 April 2017 the Disciplinary Committee directed the Registrar to suspend an Essex-based veterinary surgeon from the Register for two months for failing to have professional indemnity insurance (PII) or equivalent arrangements in compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons.

The hearing for Mrs Mullen followed a concern raised with the College in December 2015 by a member of the public relating to the respondent’s practice in Essex. Although that concern was not pursued further by the College, during the initial investigation period it was ascertained by an RCVS case manager that, contrary to the requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct, Mrs Mullen did not have PII.

In January 2016 Mrs Mullen was advised by the College that, in order to comply with the Code, she needed to ensure her professional activities were covered by PII or equivalent arrangements. The matter was considered by the Preliminary Investigation Committee which asked, in October 2016, that Mrs Mullen produce evidence that she was now compliant with the requirement to have PII or equivalent. Mrs Mullen responded in November 2016 confirming that she had not put in place such arrangements and in January 2017 the case was referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

Mr Warwick Seymour-Hamilton

Inquiry concerning: application to be restored to the Register

DC decision: application rejected

Registration status: name remains off the Register

On 15 May 2017 the Disciplinary Committee dismissed an application to be restored to the Register of Veterinary Surgeons from a former Kent-based veterinary surgeon.

Warwick Seymour-Hamilton was originally removed from the Register in June 1994 for failing to maintain his practice’s equipment and facilities in working order such that it evidenced a total disregard of basic hygiene and care for animals, thereby bringing the profession into disrepute.
During the hearing it was determined that, during the relevant time period (from November 2015 to November 2016) Mrs Mullen was practising but did not have professional indemnity insurance in place and therefore was in breach of the Code. During the hearing Mrs Mullen, who represented herself, told the Committee that she admitted that she did not have PII. She explained that she was ‘ethically and morally opposed to it’ as she felt that it did not give fair compensation to claimants and did not know it was a requirement of the Code of Professional Conduct until she was informed by the College in January 2016.

When giving oral evidence as to equivalent arrangements she disclosed that she kept significant funds in a bank account; these were not however specifically earmarked for use in the event of any possible claims, and were also required to pay practice expenses.

“The Committee is unable to overlook the Respondent’s lack of commitment to obtaining PII or equivalent arrangements, even after being advised by the College that this was essential.”

In light of evidence produced by the College and her own admissions, the charges against Mrs Mullen were found proved and she was found guilty of misconduct.

In coming to this decision Chitra Karve, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The respondent failed to have PII in place for a period of about 12 months as specified in the charges. Moreover, she failed to remedy the situation when advised in January 2016 by the College that she was in breach of the Code and the supporting guidance. This remains a continuous course of conduct, which has still not been remedied. The respondent has chosen not to read the Code, or the supporting guidance, until very recently, in relation to her obligation to have PII or equivalent arrangements in place, and she failed to heed the advice of the College that she must rectify the position.”

In considering the sanction the Committee took into account mitigating and aggravating factors. Aggravating factors included the fact that the misconduct was sustained over a significant period of time and that limited insight was shown by Mrs Mullen. While she did begin to display limited insight into the significance of her misconduct, the Committee said that this insight was “hampered by her ambivalence towards the College and the systems that regulate the veterinary profession.”

In mitigation the Committee took into account Mrs Mullen’s long and unblemished career and the fact she was a sole practitioner who reported challenging personal circumstances and provided a unique service to a niche group of clients.

However, Chitra Karve said: “The Committee is unable to overlook the Respondent’s lack of commitment to obtaining PII or equivalent arrangements, even after being advised by the College that this was essential. The Committee is aware that a suspension could adversely affect her practice and her clients that she uniquely serves. However the Committee thinks it is necessary to send a clear message to the respondent and the public, that failure to obtain PII or equivalent arrangements is wholly unacceptable.”

She added: “Accordingly, the Committee directs the Registrar to suspend the respondent’s registration for a period of two months. The Committee considers that this period of suspension will give the respondent an opportunity to rectify her breaches of the Code in relation to PII... and to reflect upon her attitude towards the College and the appropriate regulation of the veterinary profession.”

Mr David John Bibby Denny

Inquiry concerning: clinical failings in the treatment of three colts at his former practice

DC decision: accepted undertakings

Registration status: name removed from Register on 24 April 2017

On 24 April 2017 the Disciplinary Committee agreed to accept a form of undertakings from Worcester-based veterinary surgeon David John Bibby Denny who agreed to remove himself from the Register of Veterinary Surgeons and never to apply to be restored to it.

Mr Denny had a number of charges against him relating to the treatment of three colts at his former practice in Worcester in April 2015. At the outset of the hearing, Mr Denny made an application to the Committee that the hearing should be adjourned contingent on a form of undertakings being accepted. These undertakings were that his name be removed from the Register with immediate effect and that he never apply to be restored to the Register under any category.

The application was granted by the Committee, taking into account a number of factors. These include the fact that Mr Denny had now retired and closed his practice, his long and hitherto unblemished veterinary career and the fact that it would not be proportionate, or in the public interest, for there to be a lengthy hearing on the matter. The Committee noted that there were several precedents for concluding cases in such a manner. The Committee also noted that the application was supported by both the College and the complainant.

Mr Denny was removed from the Register with immediate effect.

The restoration hearing on Monday 15 May was Mr Seymour-Hamilton’s fifth application for restoration, with previous applications being submitted but refused in July 1995, June 2010, January 2015 and March 2016. However, as the Committee made its decision on the merits of the case before it, those previous applications were not considered as relevant to its decision.

Mr Seymour-Hamilton told the Committee that he currently works as a herbalist and naturopath for humans and wished to be restored to the Register so he could include animals in his research, citing his treatment of one of his dogs as evidence.

The Committee rejected his application on a number of grounds, including the impact on animal welfare should Mr Seymour-Hamilton be restored to the Register; the length of time he had been off the Register and the fact that he was therefore not up-to-date with contemporary veterinary practice and professional conduct; that his efforts to keep up-to-date in terms of knowledge, skills and developments in practice were insufficient; and his lack of evidence of public support for him or his work.

“The Committee has very great concerns about the future of the welfare of animals in the event of the applicant being permitted to have his name restored to the Register.”

Ian Green, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee has very great concerns about the future of the welfare of animals in the event of the applicant being permitted to have his name restored to the Register. He has made it clear that whilst he has no intention to return to routine veterinary general practice, he would intend to treat animals and to continue his research using animals. The Committee observes that were he to be restored to the Register, there would be no power to prevent the applicant practising as a veterinary surgeon in any way he may choose.”

He added: “The applicant has now been off the Register for nearly 23 years. It will be apparent to anyone that the veterinary profession today is in many respects different from what it was 23 years ago, (eg: in terms of medical understanding and its own regulation). The Committee is far from persuaded that the passage of 23 years has not had a negative impact on the applicant’s ability to practise safely and competently as a veterinary surgeon at this present time.”
Since the last report to Council there has been one meeting of the Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC).

Between 31 January 2017 and 18 April 2017 there were eight new concerns received against RVNs. Of these, seven are currently under investigation by the Case Examiners Group and one was closed by the Case Examiners Group as there was no arguable case.

Mr George Martin

Inquiry concerning: criminal convictions

DC decision: removal from the Register

Registration status: respondent removed from the Register on 22 June 2017

On Thursday 18 May the Disciplinary Committee directed that the Registrar remove an Oxfordshire-based veterinary surgeon from the Register after he pleaded guilty to sexual offences in court.

The hearing for George Martin took place on Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 May after he pleaded guilty to two charges of breach of the peace (sexual) at Edinburgh Sheriff Court in August 2016. The charges related to his using recording equipment at various locations in Edinburgh between August 2014 and March 2015 in order to record underwear and genitalia, whilst he was a student at the veterinary school.

The Committee found that his conviction meant that he was unfit to practise veterinary surgery on public interest grounds and to protect the reputation of the profession and to uphold and maintain professional standards. It took this decision in light of a number of aggravating factors including the repeated, reckless and premeditated nature of his conduct, the potential for emotional or mental harm to victims, and the sexual nature of the crimes.

In considering sanction the Committee heard evidence from the respondent regarding the context in which he committed the offences including his own ill-health (the details of which were heard in private) and the fact he was suffering from loss of confidence and stress due to a number of factors. These factors include the break-up of a relationship, the death of a close friend and failing his clinical foundation course.

The Committee heard that Mr Martin had undertaken veterinary work both before and after his conviction and had received positive feedback from his peers. During the course of the hearing the Committee also noted that the respondent demonstrated genuine signs of remorse and apologised to the College for the damage he has done to it and the profession.

“The Committee also noted that the respondent demonstrated genuine signs of remorse and apologised to the College for the damage he has done to it and the profession.”

In coming to its decision on sanction it considered other mitigating factors including the fact that he had been open and honest about his conviction with employers, the risk of reoffending was low and that he had developed some insight into his behaviour and the harm it caused.

In reaching its decision Chitra Karve, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee reached the conclusion that the respondent’s behaviour was so serious that removal of professional status and the rights and privileges accorded to that status is the only means of protecting the wider public interest.

“It has not taken this decision lightly, and, lest it be misinterpreted, it has not taken it in order to satisfy any notional public demand for blame and punishment. It has taken the decision because in its perception the reputation of the profession had to be at the forefront of its thinking and ultimately it was more important than the interests of the respondent.

“The decision is not simply based on the fact that these offences were of a sexual nature but because they were repeated frequently over a significant period of time and at the time the respondent knew on his own admission that what he was doing was wrong.”

Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary

Report to VN Council, June 2017

RVN PIC Chair Suzanne May

Since the last report to Council there has been one meeting of the Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC).

Between 31 January 2017 and 18 April 2017 there were eight new concerns received against RVNs. Of these, seven are currently under investigation by the Case Examiners Group and one was closed by the Case Examiners Group as there was no arguable case.

Ongoing investigations

TheRVN PIC has five ongoing cases. Of these one case has been held open for the maximum period of two years to ensure continued monitoring or until the individual is found to be compliant with the required minimum continuing professional development hours of 45 hours over three years. Three cases have been referred to solicitors for statements and the remaining case has been adjourned pending the outcome of a criminal trial against the individual.

Health and Performance Protocols

There are currently no RVNs on the Health or Performance Protocols.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report the RVN PIC has referred one case to the RVN Disciplinary Committee and is awaiting a listing date.
Veterinary Evidence in audio!

Drugs and veterinary nurses alike are constantly striving to provide the best possible care by learning from each other, from their successes and failures and by sharing observations and outcomes as part of our ongoing commitment to evidence-based veterinary medicine.

At RCVS Knowledge we will now be helping practitioners achieve better patient care and outcomes by encouraging the profession to embrace the concept of quality improvement (QI).

We want to start a conversation about QI, and learn more about the small things practitioners can do to assist not only patients, but staff, animal owners, and veterinary practices. We are working with leading veterinary clinicians and nurses to develop e-learning tools, guidelines, and digital resources. We are seeking input from everyone across the veterinary profession, to build a collaborative and innovative repository of information to benefit all members of the veterinary community.

Through this project we want to celebrate those that are working every day towards better patient outcomes. So, if you or one of your colleagues is working towards improving the way your practice operates and cares for patients or if you have initiated a new procedure that will enhance the capabilities of your practice then we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to tell us about it, please email ebvm@rcvsknowledge.org

RCVS Knowledge is proud to introduce Audio Summaries, our new free resource! These are short audio overviews of our popular Knowledge Summaries. Recorded by the author, they will highlight the clinical findings and explain how each papers’ recommendations can be implemented in practice.

Audio Summaries will make it quicker and easier for vets and vet nurses to access and digest relevant and up-to-date evidence; meaning it’s a time-saving way to make better, evidence-based decisions!

Our first Audio Summary is available at https://goo.gl/7RjC3Z.

RCVS Knowledge will be hosting a QI seminar on 15 November 2017; it will include an introduction to quality improvement along with practical applications and resources to take back to your practice.

This one day event will be hosted in London the day before the London Vet Show. More details to follow, check our twitter @RCVSKnowledge for the latest news.

Save The Date

Journal clubs are a great way for practices to keep up-to-date with the latest research, stimulate reflection on current topics and encourage team-work. They also help develop the critical appraisal and presentation skills of the participants and provide continuing professional development (CPD).

Want to start a Journal Club but not sure where to begin? Our guide Setting up and running a journal club in practice (https://goo.gl/I2fZuZ) offers advice on how to start one and top tips for success.

If you need help selecting and accessing articles, the Library & Information Service can help with selection of articles as well as providing access to full text via the membership scheme (www.rcvsknowledge.org/joinlibrary).

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Our first Veterinary History Podcast discusses the Boer War correspondence of Army veterinarian Frederick Smith. Abbie Latham, an MA History student at King’s College London, transcribed the letters held in our archive, and, in her podcast, explores how the letters relate to technological developments in war reporting in the 19th century. Abbie’s fascinating essay brings a fresh perspective and historical insight into the letters, which will be of interest to all audiences.

The podcast is live at https://goo.gl/OLuQzB and the letters themselves are available to view at vhdigital.org, with accompanying transcripts to help with the very difficult handwriting!
RCVS News at a glance…

Too busy to read the lot? Start here for important dates for your diary and story summaries, so you can decide what might be worth reading in full.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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<td>Leicester City Football Club</td>
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That’s quality, that is
Collaborating on quality improvement