Council Meeting

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 3 September 2026 at 10:30 am in Rooms 4a and 4b, 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

Agenda	Classification[1]	Rationale[2]
1. **President's introduction**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. **Apologies for absence**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. **Declaration of interests**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. **Minutes of previous meetings**		
i. 13 May 2026 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
ii. 13 May 2026 – classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**
iii. 4 June 2026 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. 4 June 2026 – classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5**
v. 23 June 2026 – classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**
vi. 26 June – 3 July 2026 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
vii. 26 June – 3 July 2026 – classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**
5. **Matters arising**		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO report	Unclassified	n/a
6. **Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)**		
a. Under Care review – update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council Effectiveness Group report	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

	c. Review of Code of Conduct for Council members and Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members	Unclassified	n/a
	d. Internal audit strategy framework	Unclassified	n/a
7.	**Reports of standing committees – to note**		
	a. Advancement of the Professions Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	b. Audit and Risk Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	c. Education Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	d. Finance and Resources Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	e. Registration Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	f. Standards Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	g. Veterinary Nurses Council	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
	h. Professional Conduct Liaison Committee	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
8.	**Reports of statutory committees – to note**		
	a. Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
	b. RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee	Unclassified	n/a
	c. Disciplinary Committee and VN Disciplinary Committee Please note: details of disciplinary cases are found on the website, see: https://www.rcvs.org.uk/veterinary-professionals/conduct-and-guidance/concerns-about-veterinary-professionals/disciplinary-committee-hearings and navigate to the individual cases from there.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
9.	**Notices of motion**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a

10. **Questions**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. **Any other College business (unclassified items)**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. **Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)**	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. **Date of next meeting** Thursday, 5 November 2026 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon) to be held in person at 1-2 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
14. **Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)**		
a. Major projects – update	Oral report **Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**
b. Competition and Markets Authority – update	Oral report **Confidential**	**1, 3, 4**
c. Legislative reform and governance – update	Oral report **Confidential**	**1**
15. **Any other College business (confidential items)**		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report **Confidential**	**# TBC**
b. Other business	Oral report **Confidential**	**# TBC**
16. **Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)**	Oral report **Confidential**	**# TBC**
17. **Training session**	**Confidential**	**1, 4**
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk		

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[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
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Terms of Reference

The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

1. Our vision is always to be ambitious and compassionate, working collaboratively to build trust and inspire all veterinary professionals to succeed.

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

2. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:

   a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.

   b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:

      i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
      ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
      iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
      iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
      v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
      vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
      vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
      viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
      ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
      x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
      xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
      xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
      xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.

4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. The appointment of the Registrar will be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.

5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.

6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

How Council members' work

7. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:

   a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
   b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
   c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
   d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
   e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
   f. Live the College's values;
   g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
   h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
   i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
   j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
   k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;
   l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	13 May 2026
Title	Minutes of the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 13 May 2026.
Summary	Minutes of the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 13 May 2026
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix **(confidential)**
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	**Classification[1]**	**Rationales[2]**
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4.**

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Council

Minutes of the confidential remote Extra-ordinary meeting held on Wednesday, 13 May 2026 by MS Teams

Professor T D H Parkin (in the Chair)
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones
Professor D C Barrett
Miss L S Belton
*Dr S E Bennett
Dr S R Bescoby
Mr D Bray
Dr A L Calow
Mr J M Castle
Ms J Clift
Mrs O D R Cook
Ms L Ford
Dr M M S Gardiner
Mr P J Gordon
Dr D L Greenberg
Mr T M Hutchinson
Professor M D Jones
Dr Z J Kennedy
Professor C M Loughrey
Mrs C-L McLaughlan
*Dr A J McLeish
Dr S Paterson
Mr T J Walker
*Mrs K Young

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Mr I A Holloway	Director of Communications (DoComms)
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations (DoOps)
Mr B Myring	Head of Policy, Insight and Public Affairs (HoPIPA)
Ms C L Paget	Registrar
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Governance Manager
Mr D Simpson	Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer (SPPAO)
Mr S Wiklund	Head of Legal Services (HoLS) / Assistant Registrar

Guests:

Mr V Olowe	Chair, RCVS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

President's introduction

1. The President thanked Council and guests for joining the short notice meeting and apologised for the short notice of papers being sent out, some of which had only been received by the College a couple of hours prior to the extra-ordinary meeting. He outlined the order of the meeting and

reminded Council not to use unsupported and unauthorised artificial intelligence (AI) software when attending College meetings, nor to summarise Private and Confidential papers.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

   - Dr Bennett
   - Mrs Young

3. Dr McLeish was not in attendance.

Declarations of interest

4. There were no new declarations of interest to report.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) – update and draft undertakings

5. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 21.

Legislative reform and governance – update

6. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 22 – 37.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

7. The following item was raised from the closed session of the meeting:

   - the effect the resignation of the Prime Minister could have on legislative work, should a leadership challenge occur over the course of the next few days.

Date of next meeting

8. The next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 4 June 2026, commencing at 10:00 am with a scheduled end time of 4:00 pm. The meeting would be held in person at the Hardwick Street offices.

9. The meeting was brought to a close.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	4 June 2026
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2026
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2026
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix **(private / confidential)**
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	**Classification**[1]	**Rationales**[2]
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Classified appendix	**Private / Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4, 5**

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Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 4 June 2026 in Rooms 4a and 4b at 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

Professor T D H Parkin (in the Chair)

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Dr M M S Gardiner
Professor D C Barrett	Mr P J Gordon
Miss L S Belton	Dr D L Greenberg
Dr S E Bennett	Mr T M Hutchinson
Dr S R Bescoby	Professor M D Jones
*Mr D Bray	Dr Z J Kennedy
Dr A L Calow	Professor C M Loughrey
Mr J M Castle	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Ms J Clift	Dr S Paterson
Mrs O D R Cook	Mr T J Walker
Ms L Ford	Mrs K Young

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Ms L Hall	People Director
Mr I A Holloway	Director of Communications (DoComms)
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Ms C L McCann	Director of Operations (DoOps)
Mr B Myring	Head of Policy, Insight, and Public Affairs (HoPIPA)
Ms C L Paget	Registrar
Dr L Prescott-Clements	Director of Operations (DoEd)
Mr D Simpson	Senior Policy and Public Affairs Officer (SPPAO)
Mr K Thakrar	EA to CEO
Mr D Tysoe	Chief Digital Officer (CDO)
Mr S Wiklund	Head of Legal Services – Education and Registration (HoLS-E&R)

Guests:

Ms E Brown	Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Dr N T Connell	FRCVS (open session only)
Professor N Cooper	Chair, Veterinary Clinical Pathways Working Group (VCCPWG) (agenda item 14f only)
Ms A Findon	Director of Policy and Governance, British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)

Mr J Loeb	*Veterinary Record* (open session only)
Mr V Olowe	Chair, RCVS Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
Mr C Simpson	*Veterinary Times* (open session only)
Dr R A Williams	MRCVS, President, BVA (open session only)

President's introduction

1. The President welcomed Council and guests and outlined the order of the meeting. Council was reminded not to use unsupported and unauthorised artificial intelligence (AI) software when attending College meetings, nor to summarise Private and Confidential papers.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mr Bray	
- Dr Middlemiss	Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), Observer. Ms Brown attending in her stead)
- Mr Castle	Joined from 11:00 am
- Dr Greenberg	Apologies from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm

Declarations of interest

3. There were no new declarations of interest to report.

Minutes of previous meetings

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the classified appendix of the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 23 February 2026; the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 12 March 2026; and the remote decision held 7 – 13 April 2026, and they were before Council for approval.

5. It was noted that the draft minutes of the Extra-ordinary Council meeting held on 13 May 2026 were currently out for comment and would be before Council for approval at its next scheduled meeting.

6. There were no comments or questions.

7. Council was asked to approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendices of the meetings held on 23 February, 12 March and 7 – 13 April 2026. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	19
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	2

8. The minutes and classified appendices were agreed by a majority vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

9. Council noted the recent passing of Professor Barbara Weaver FRCVS, an early influential pioneer of anaesthesia within the veterinary profession, who had helped to set up the RCVS diploma for veterinary anaesthesia, and who had been awarded the Faculty Medal of the College of Anaesthetists and Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, amongst other numerous awards.

10. Council and guests stood for a minute silence for all members of the professions who had passed since the last meeting.

Council correspondence

11. The President reported the following:

Royal College Day 2026

12. The event would be held at 1 Great George Street, Westminster, and the brief outline of the day was noted. Invitations had been sent out from the Events Team, and Council members that had yet to register for the event were asked to do so via the RCVS website.

RCVS Council elections 2026

13. Council had been informed of the outcome of the recent RCVS Council election 2026. Newly-elected members taking up four-year terms at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) were Mr Ian Battersby FRCVS, returning past president Dr Neil Smith FRCVS, and Dr Lara Wilson MRCVS. A formal goodbye would be given to Dr Calow MRCVS, Dr Cook MRCVS, and Dr Paterson FRCVS at the AGM.

14. Of the lay Council members, a formal goodbye would be given to Mr Bray and Mr Walker. Their replacements and the reappointment of Mrs McLaughlan for a final term would be discussed during later in the agenda in closed session.

15. The contributions of all retiring members are attached to the minutes at **Annex A**.

16. On the VN Council election 2026, successful candidates were Miss Meghan Conroy RVN and Miss Lauren Hargrave RVN; congratulations had been passed on to them.

17. There would also be a formal goodbye to the current Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), Victor Olowe at the AGM. A decision would be before Council over the summer once the new ARC member had joined the Committee, that would allow all external lay members to have the opportunity to apply.

Skills matrices

18. Council members were reminded that a blank skills matrix had been emailed to them on 12 May and were asked to update their entries and return by Wednesday, 10 June 2026; the information contained therein would assist with the ongoing exercise for committee population for the next College year and, in addition, taken into consideration for future training opportunities.

Future meeting dates

19. It was noted that the main meeting dates to the end of 2026 were listed in the Contacts and Calendar booklet 2025 – 2026; dates to the end of 2027 would be circulated shortly.

CEO update

20. The CEO outlined the summary of work since Council last met, and an updated operational plan showing activity. She highlighted:

    - the end of the College year was a busy period, not least because of the preparation for Royal College Day and the planning for the next committee cycle, which took time on top of the ‘business as usual’;

    - the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) project was in its end phase;

    - Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) work was ongoing and incredibly busy;

    - work continued with Defra in relation to a new Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) – Council would receive updates on CMA and VSA items in the confidential session and noted that they were confidential due to requests from those third parties. A question that often flowed from such large volumes of work was how the staff team was coping and she noted that, out of a team of c.200 people, there would always be some that struggled at any particular point, but that the College tried to support them as best it could; not just in terms of making sure there was mental health support available and strong managerial support, but also regarding the bigger picture, to make sure that staff stayed well connected to the ‘why’;

    - a recent ‘Staff Together Day’ had focussed on the purpose and in particular the action in the RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029 to ‘bring the outside in’. There had been speakers who were regulated professionals, vets and nurses; there were people from within the RCVS team who were regulated professionals in different professions talking about their relationship with their regulators; some Council members had also joined the day who spoke about their role as Council members, which was really beneficial. There had also been some vets working in atypical roles that, as a College, were not often heard from, for example, one that was working in a social prescribing space where a charity looked to keep animals and people together for as long as possible. In particular, the keynote speaker was very well received – a profoundly deaf veterinary nursing assistant, talking through her interpreter, about her relationship with the veterinary world and the team and also how to better support deaf people with their animal health and welfare issues;

- a staff survey had recently been circulated and was due to close soon; high scores were not necessarily expected because there was a lot of current uncertainty due to factors outwith the College's control and uncertainty often bred disquiet. It would, however, be a useful 'temperature check';

- a press release would shortly be going out to the profession about a Veterinary Artificial Intelligence (AI) Transparency Alliance. When the College had met with veterinary professionals, it had been noted that they mainly wanted to use their professional judgement about which AI tools they should use, how they should use them, and how they should communicate such use to their client base. There had, however, been two gaps: one where they did not necessarily know what information they should ask for; and, secondly, that such information might not necessarily be readily available, or available in a format that was easy to reconcile. The College did not have a statutory responsibility to regulate devices and neither did the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), nor the human healthcare counterparts. Following a series of meetings, the Alliance was set up by a group of stakeholder organisations and individuals from across the veterinary, technology and regulatory spheres to discuss the gap and it would shortly seek views on a draft framework to support responsible AI use;

- a Regional Question Time (RQT) had been held in Edinburgh. Main topics of the conversation were around the CMA and VSA, as well as the Veterinary Clinical Career Pathway (VCCP) project that was also before Council later in the agenda. Discussions were generally positive and an overall message gained from the meeting was that it was really important for the College's representatives to go out and listen to the profession's concerns;

- finally, an item not in the paper as it only happened the day previous, was that RCVS Academy had launched a new course to help those who were acting as witnesses in Disciplinary Committee hearings to help them understand their role. It was understandably a very stressful time and the course included in a 360-degree interactive tour of the building up to the third floor, where it showed exactly where they, and the Committee, would sit. It was designed to reduce anxiety around coming into an unknown environment and time could be spent familiarising themselves. It gave a clear understanding of what should be expected, not just how you would be questioned but also practical things like what to bring on the day and who they would talk to. As with all Academy courses, it was free to access for all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

21. Comments and questions included:

- if the Senior Team was looking after the staff, who was looking after the Senior Team?

    - people were working together strongly as a team; the CMA work in particular had united the Senior Team in terms of work and support; they had been encouraged to take leave and to reclaim time when working long hours – practicably, however, it was 'all hands-on deck. The results of the staff survey would be considered once they were in and action plans developed from there;

- [I] loved that there was a section in the Strategic Plan entitled '*Lighting a fire of enthusiasm for veterinary work in the minds of the next generation…'* and how that had come across, as well as the items under that section.

22. The update was noted.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

Registration appeals and review rules

23. The Head of Legal Services – Education and Registration (HoLS-E&R) introduced the paper. It was noted that the matter was first brought to Council in 2024 and the papers contained the history that led to the decision now before Council; to amend the rules previously considered by Council in order to comprehensively and legally cover all registration decisions. The key annex was confidential Annex A to the paper that contained legal advice.

24. The second part to the paper outlined that the previous Registration Appeals Committee (RAC) was a statutory committee and was necessary due to UK EU membership and was constituted under amendments then made to the VSA. Upon EU-exit, those amendments were deleted and therefore meant there was no statutory basis for the RAC, so it had been disbanded.

25. Since then, international agreements signed by the UK now required there to be appeals processes for professionals coming from specific countries with qualifications. Those were in relation to the European Economic Area (EEA) / European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Switzerland, which included veterinary surgeons. Therefore, the re-establishment of an appeals committee was required to satisfy that obligation. In addition, the proposed rules would allow for reviews of other registration decisions relating to veterinary surgeons – there was no statutory appeal right in respect of those, but would, however, allow for errors to be corrected, potentially pre-empting Judicial Review (JR) applications.

26. Appeals of registration decisions relating to veterinary nurses under the Charter were also included and formalised. They currently went to Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC) – which had also considered the paper – under the Veterinary Nurse Registration Rules (also in the process of being amended). That requirement would be removed so that the re-established appeals committee would deal with veterinary nurse registration decisions.

27. Some previous suggestions by Council and the Registration Committee had not been taken forward for legal reasons, such as charging fees and restricting the ambit of appeals.

28. Comments and questions included:

- with regards to populating the committees, the College had independent members on the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), and Disciplinary Committee (DC). Being mindful that it also had a lot of appeals committees, there was a lot of experience available within individual members in how to work with / interpret legal advice and how you went forward; when populating a new committee, was there a way of amalgamating groups without breaching any statutory regulation, to use the available expertise and keep training costs down?

    - o that had been discussed; the College could not use sitting members on PIC or DC as those committees must remain independent of Council and its delegated committees. However, the individuals involved with other appeals committees within the College could be co-opted onto the Registration Appeals and Reviews Committee (RARC). It was worth noting that since EU-exit, no appeals had been received in relation to registration, so there might not be much business for the RARC;

- what was the policy timescales from receipt of appeal to when the appellant is informed of the decision made by the panel;

    - o it would be exactly the same process as there currently was in relation to the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) – usual practice was that an oral decision was made on the day the committee met, which was followed by an approved written decision several days later; the appellant was informed when they received the written decision. It might not necessarily need to be in the rules, but it was certainly something that could be considered for inclusion.

29. Council was asked to:

    a. make the Registration Appeals and Reviews Rules 2026; and
    b. re-establish an appeals committee entitled: ‘The Registration Appeals and Reviews Committee (RARC)’.

30. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	22
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

31. Dr Bennett experienced technical difficulties and provided her vote by email, which was included in the figures.

32. The Registration Appeals and Reviews Rules 2026 and the re-establishment of the Registration Appeals and Reviews Committee were approved by a majority vote.

Proposal for changes to Honours and Awards programme

33. The CEO introduced the paper. Council had considered candidates for honours and awards at its March meeting, and she was pleased to report that all proposed recipients had now accepted, and notifications had been sent to the veterinary press; their awards would be presented at the forthcoming Royal College Day.

34. When Nominations Committee* met to consider the awards and make recommendations to Council, some recommendations for change were proposed – they were not part of the paper at the March meeting so as not to detract from the process at that time. The four specific changes were:

    - split the Student Community Award: most of the award categories had been reduced from two awards to one following the 2025 Nominations Committee and subsequent Council meeting. Whilst that had worked well, the Student Community Award was the only award category that students were permitted to enter, so it was felt to be unfair that both veterinary, and veterinary nursing, students vied for the same award and, because the College wanted to encourage both types of students to play a key role in their community, Nominations Committee recommended that the award be split into two subcategories, one each for a veterinary student and a veterinary nursing student;

    - self-nomination in the first person: a decision had been made a number of years ago that people could self-nominate for awards. At the time, when self-nominations came in, the Committee commented that it felt odd that a person was writing about themselves in glowing terms, which did not sit well. The decision had been made to ‘neutralise’ those awards so that they were all read in the third person. However, it was noted that when the nomination was read in the third person, but then it was discovered to be a self-nomination, it seemed disingenuous and awkward. Therefore, the Committee decided to revert to nominations being written in the first person so that it was obvious it was a self-nomination;

    - reduction in number of supporting statements: the Committee felt that the decision-making for the awards process was onerous, that the form was repetitive, and the collation of supporting statements was perhaps too much work and might explain why there were a preponderance of nominations from the veterinary and veterinary nursing schools where there might be more staff able to do those tasks. It was considered that, if the process was streamlined, it might encourage more nominations from within practice – not that the school nominations were not credible, but it was to enhance the opportunities for all. The only restriction on that was if it was a self-nomination, when two supporting statements remained necessary;

    - runners up for the Queen’s Medal and VN Golden Jubilee Award: there had been the situation for various reasons in the past where for the Queen's Medal, which was the highest award that veterinary surgeons could receive (and likewise veterinary nurses for the VN Golden Jubilee Award), people stayed in the ‘pool’ of runners up for a period of a further two years, regardless of where they sat in the voting scheme in their initial year of nomination. The rationale was that, by definition, there was a small pool of people eligible for those awards – if nominations were only permitted for the current year, then it could mean some years without any nominations at all. Furthermore, an anomaly within the process had meant that all veterinary nominees were kept in the pool, but that only two nurses were kept as runners up and only then if they had scored above six in the marking, so it was inequitable. The Committee recommended that the two awards be brought in line with the nursing ruling so that only two runners up stayed in the pool and only if they had scored over six on average across the Committee; that in the event of a tie, then an additional person would go through.

35. There was a further additional recommendation to change the name of the *Nominations Subcommittee to Nominations Committee and to revise the terms of reference (which would be dealt with later in the agenda so was not for decision in the honours and awards paper).

36. The President commented that the changes were wholly sensible and that, unless there were any comments or questions that Council should vote on the decisions as a whole. There were no comments or questions.

37. Council was asked to approve:

   a. the RCVS Student Community Award to be split into vet and VN subcategories;
   b. self-nominations for any category to be made in the first person;
   c. only one supporting statement be required for nominations, unless it was a self-nomination, when two remained necessary;
   d. two runners up for each of the Queen's Medal and the VN Golden Jubilee Award stayed in the pool for a further two years, provided they scored six or over. In the event of a tie in scoring, then both tied nominees are taken forward to the next year.

38. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	21
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

39. The changes to the nominations paperwork for RCVS Honours and Awards were agreed by a majority vote.

RCVS Delegation Scheme 2026

40. The CEO introduced the paper, highlighting its purpose of how Council delegated responsibility through a series of standing committees and other sub-groups, and their related Terms of Reference (ToR). Council was reminded that if there was a request to set up a new subcommittee level group, a proposal needed to be put to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) to not only discuss the appropriate financing, but to ensure that the workload was not spiralling as a lot of time was involved with supporting those groups.

41. The paper before Council included: minor amendments to tidy up inconsistencies; a new Registration Appeals and Reviews Committee (included on the premise that the agenda item earlier in the meeting had a positive outcome); and a new section at the request of the Finance

and Resources, and Audit and Risk, Committees, to separate the specific guidance related to their annual joint meeting whereby they considered the annual report into its own section.

42. The name change for the Nominations Subcommittee to Nominations Committee was questioned in that it could potentially cost an additional £3,000 per annum because subcommittees – with the exception of Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) – were not subject to claims for reading time. It was confirmed that the Committee met once a year, albeit with a huge amount of paperwork and that, subject to Council approval of the Delegation Scheme, adjustments would be made to the budget, which would come to Council for discussion in November.

43. Council was asked to approve the amended Scheme at Annex A to the paper, or suggest further amendments, as appropriate. If proposed further amendments were significant, they would go back to the relevant committee for discussion. No further amendments were proposed.

44. An electronic vote was taken:

For:	21
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	1

45. The RCVS Delegation Scheme 2026 was agreed by a majority vote.

Council Effectiveness Group (CEG)

46. The Chair, CEG, introduced the paper. She acknowledged the large volume of work that had been undertaken by the Executive and the Group itself and highlighted the following:

- when considering evaluation of the board (Council, in the College's case), it was good regulatory practice to have some form of external evaluation. Whilst being comfortable with the College undertaking its own internal evaluation of Council effectiveness for two years out of three, it was felt that, for the third year, it would be useful to have some form of external evaluation; it was understood the People Director was investigating that. As there were changes with the VSA towards an appointed Board, instead of a Council, it was believed that type of evaluation would become even more important;

- there was the opportunity for individual Council members to have reflective sessions with the President, which were considered really useful. Again, going forward, as changes to the make-up of Council started, consideration should be given to formalise that process and use it as an opportunity for members to express their desires and ambitions, and the ways in which they would want to see Council progressing; to bring attention to where there could be improvements to skill sets;

- a lot of work was planned, including a training schedule and the creation of online resources. When considering the composition of the Group going forward, there was a commitment to have a new council member on it each year, which would provide a good opportunity to reflect on how effective the Group, and the induction material, was. The use of 'buddies' for the first year for new members on Council was a great indication of the College as a compassionate regulator, in supporting its Council members to do the best job possible.

47. Comments and questions included:

- in another role, [I] do board effectiveness reviews for regulators and public bodies. Cabinet Office guidance was to do them every three years. Personally, [I] consider it to be a really important and valuable process, and agree with the friendly appraisal process, the training induction and the buddies, which worked well at the RCVS. To be slightly contentious, consideration should also be given to the expenses process and remuneration – with a move to annual remuneration;

- support was given for annual remuneration, particularly when members were chairs of subcommittees as that generated a significant amount of work that was not financially comparative when compared to a member that was on a committee that did not meet as frequently. There was also support for formalisation of appraisals, which should be with more than just the President with a greater structure in place;

- the reflection sessions at the end of Council meetings were also really useful; on other (external) boards there were reflection sessions after all the committee meetings and [I] question if that was something the College could consider going forward – to spend five minutes just reflecting on how well we thought our performance has been, whether there were things we could have done better, what things went really well, and take that learning forward;

- the addition of RCVS values to the reflection session was a useful addition;

- the resourcing of appraisals was not insignificant – it was not a small Council; be mindful of where that resource was coming from and the skill sets required for it to be effective;

- who would conduct those appraisals and what did it look like for other bodies, and how would it work with an external board review every three years?

    - o generally, the appraisals would be done by the Chair of the Board. In a new setup under a new VSA, whatever the Board structure was, it would be the Chair undertaking the appraisals; individual members would complete a pre-designed template to provide a basis for discussions, coupled with additional feedback from the Chair (i.e. Chair / President). Regarding the involvement of additional people, to date that had not been part of past experience;

- the challenge with it being the President undertaking appraisals was that that person changed on a yearly basis, and it very much depended on their experience level – a President that was a general practitioner vet could have an appraisal style that was very different to somebody who had management experience; there was a danger of inconsistency;

    - o going forward, under a new VSA, the Chair might be a more permanent position, for a three- or six-year post, but the comments would be considered in the future planning – as an appointed regulatory board, there should be independent appraisals and the Board itself should be appraised.

48. The President confirmed that he would feed back themes from the recent individual one-to-one meetings with Council members to the People Director to take actions forward to the Group. He thanked members and staff involved, noting that that work around Council culture had come an incredibly long way over the last six years which had been reflected in the conversations he had had.

49. The People Director thanked the Chair, CEG, for her support and guidance in reaching that position.

50. The paper was noted.

Offences under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966

51. The Registrar introduced the paper, and highlighted that, in March 2023, Council had adopted a trial period for the Private Prosecutions Protocol for 12-months, after which Council had confirmed that the Protocol should be kept place with an annual report to Council.

52. It was noted that there had been a reduction in reports of illegal activity for the same period in 2025; that there had been no court proceedings brought by the College – nor had there been since the Protocol had been in place. The College had, however, supported prosecutions brought by the police; it had supplied witness statements; and had also provided assistance to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) for its enforcement work.

53. Generally, the College received reports about adverts on Facebook or other social media, and it would investigate from there. As the College could not bring a court case on the basis of a Facebook / other social media post, it adopted a compliance model where the practitioner or the person undertaking the activity – if they were identified – were written to outlining that the College had received the report and to tell them to 'cease and desist' whatever they were doing. There had been no follow up reports of continuing activity following that correspondence.

54. Comments and questions included:

- was it considered that the Protocol was acting as a disincentive, as there was money allocated and the College was prepared to prosecute people, or was it that people were not as bad as first thought?

    - it was not that the College was not doing anything as plenty happened 'behind the scenes' such as writing to people and cooperating with other agencies; it had just not brought any court proceedings. It appeared that that had been effective;

- it was important to members to know such work happened, and should be something that the College communicated to the profession, because it did not currently appear to be included in the annual report, which was felt to be an omission and it would provide some reassurance that the College did take interest in such activities;

- how familiar were people with the opportunity to report illegal practice and was the route for reporting published?
    - o that would be looked into;
- what was the RCVS relationship like with trading standards and the police; was there a good link that meant private prosecution was less likely because the relationship was effective and proactive and thus reduced the College's potential costs?
    - o the paper detailed how the College had cooperated with the police and trading standards, noting that the College appeared to have more contact with the police; the relationships appeared to work well. From a VMD point of view, when the College was notified of matters relevant to them, joint visits would be undertaken and cooperation provided in terms of providing information and statements. To bring its own prosecution the College would need an evidential base to do so, and it was often a struggle to get such evidence;
- historically [I] received lots of complaints, for example, about prescribing to animals that were not under an individual's care. Evidence base had been mentioned, and awareness of work undertaken should be raised – the requirement to provide evidence should also be part of that awareness because otherwise it became a frustrating cycle of reporting to the College, but it was mistakenly assumed that it had done nothing, so what was the point – it was difficult to get evidence and if someone was going to be prosecuted a good evidence base was essential;
    - o there was a clear need to raise awareness of the work and the degree of evidence required; there was also the need to manage expectations.

55. The paper was noted.

Reports of standing committees – to note

Advancement of the Professions Committee (APC)

56. The Chair, APC, reported that:

- a new Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) requirement came into effect on 1 April around suicide prevention. PSS and Mind Matters Teams had worked together to create exemplary resources to support the requirement – those were available online and both teams thanked for their work on them. The resources were clear, accessible and gave practical steps and guidance and would be invaluable to the professions. Further supportive work included in-person events around managerial support, and leadership conversations on workplace mental health;
- some of the newer management-focused Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions had seen a lower uptake – the Committee had discussed possible barriers to

uptake, which were being reviewed to improve engagement and included whether there were other functions within the College that the Committee could work collaboratively with;

- regarding sustainability and the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC), the Committee had discussed ongoing development of the College's environment and sustainability plan, which included working towards Investors in the Environment (iIE) silver accreditation and an exploration of sector-wide net zero approaches. There would be future papers on sustainable food policies; carbon offsetting; and how the RCVS could support wider environmental leadership across the veterinary professions.

57. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

58. The Chair, ARC, reported that one of the aims of the Committee of the last 12-months had been trying to enhance internal audit arrangements within the organisation. At its meeting in May, the Committee considered the first draft of the internal audit strategy framework, which set out the approach towards how internal audit could be utilised more effectively within the organisation. It was a comprehensive document and the intention, subject to the feedback provided, was that it would be put to Council for approval.

59. That was a huge development in terms of the strategy and a useful feature of the document was that it was very risk-based – instead of commissioning an internal audit based upon a very routine approach, it would be informed by the risk that the organisation faced and it was targeted towards addressing the need for assurance.

60. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Education Committee (EC)

61. The President, as Chair, EC, reported that at its recent meeting there had been a number of veterinary school reports and decisions. Letters had been sent to the schools following the meeting.

62. Also before Committee was the progress on Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) which came before Council later in the agenda in closed session. Further discussions covered updates on the Statutory Membership Examination; Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP); and CPD compliance.

63. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)

64. The Treasurer, as Chair, FRC, reported that items to report were mainly classified as confidential and could not be discussed in open session. She took the opportunity to ask colleagues to submit their expenses as soon as possible.

65. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Registration Committee (RC)

66. The President as Chair, RC, reported that there was nothing in particular to note from the Committee apart from the Registration Appeals and Reviews Committee that had already been discussed earlier in the meeting. The Committee's Terms of Reference had been updated with some minor changes, and a report on registration statistics had been discussed

67. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Standards Committee (SC)

68. The Chair, SC, reported that:

- progress had been made on the review of Chapter 13 of the Supporting Guidance of the Code of Professional Conduct (CoPC), which linked to the requirements for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and confidentiality around veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses' notes that were passed to clients and to other practices;

- work continued on the PSS review and in addition around veterinary nurse prescribers, which remained confidential at that time.

69. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC)

70. The Chair, VNC, reported that:

- there had been a successful VN Day held in Edinburgh. It was an event that saw a large number of graduating VN students and their families celebrating their success;

- the Chair and Vice-Chair, VNC, had attended the recent Regional Question Time (RQT), a separate event also held in Edinburgh to represent a veterinary nursing point of view when meeting members of the professions;

- VNC met in May where it had the opportunity to thank the forthcoming retiring members Matthew Rendle RVN and Simon Williams RVN; Kirsty Young had been successfully voted on to take over as VNC Chair from the forthcoming Royal College Day, with the current Chair, stepping into a Vice-Chair position; and, it had noted the report of the temporary enrolment of students had increased. It was noted, however, that registration of VNs educated outside of the UK had dropped by about 13.7%, predominantly that of EU students.

71. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Professional Conduct Liaison Committee (PCLC)

72. The Chair, PCLC, reported that:

- along with other regulators, there was a slight uptick in complaints, the detail and length of concerns (which might be attributed to increased availability of AI), and then a refusal to accept the outcome of cases that lead to concern-related reviews. The Committee focused a lot of time on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but that it also wanted to maintain the quality in the way those were looked at. To do that, the College had increased resource into the team;

- a Decision Review Group (DRG) was being developed – something the College had not had previously. The PCLC had considered and agreed that there should be two external members on the Group to provide the proper degree of independence and external scrutiny; recruitment was ongoing and it was hoped the inaugural meeting of the Group would take place within a couple of months. Its function was to look at the decisions of the Disciplinary Committee (DC) and the Charter Case Committee (CCC). It was noted that once the decisions had been made, the College did not have the legal power to appeal or to do anything about them; it was more to assess whether decisions were clear; whether they had referred to the right things; whether legal advice had been properly provided; etc., with a view to providing feedback; identifying training needs; and identify process issues that needed to be resolved.

73. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Reports of statutory committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)

74. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC)

75. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Disciplinary Committee and VN Disciplinary Committee (DC)

76. There were no comments or questions raised, and the report was noted.

Notices of motion

77. There had been no notices of motion received.

Questions

78. There had been no questions received.

Any other College business (unclassified items)

Dr McLeish

79. The President reported that Dr McLeish had resigned from Council with immediate effect for personal reasons, and best wishes had been offered for the future.

80. Under the rules for the elections, the outcome of the 2026 elections did not become official until Royal College Day in July, that meant the newly-vacant position would be offered to the candidate who received the next highest number of votes during the 2025 election to serve for the remainder of Dr McLeish's term to RCVS Day 2027.

81. Ordinarily that would have been Dr Lara Wilson who came fifth, however, as she stood for election again in 2026 and was successful (albeit not due to commence her first term until July), she was offered the shortened term but decided against it and would instead come onto Council in July as expected for a full four-year term.

82. Therefore, the remaining term vacancy was offered to the person that came sixth in the 2025 election which was Miss Alison Price (who also stood in 2026 but was unsuccessful), who had accepted. The shortened term was to keep the rolling schedule of elections correct.

83. Council looked forward to working with Miss Price, whose term commenced the following day, Friday, 5 June 2026.

84. There was no other business to report.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)

85. Whilst understanding that the Corporate Risk Register would be discussed in detail later in the agenda, it was questioned if the risk of cyber-attack could be considered? It was noted that the College's overall control rating was effective but, in reality, was there anybody in the country that could state that their cyber security was effective? The President confirmed the wording of the risk could be considered.

Date of next meeting

86. The next scheduled meeting of Council was immediately following the AGM on Friday, 3 July 2026 to be held at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA.

87. Thereafter the next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 3 September 2026, to be held in person commencing at 10:00 am at 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB and had an expected end time of 4:00 pm.

Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)

Corporate Risk Register – annual consideration

88. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 23.

Major projects – update (taken out of order of the agenda)

89. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 24 – 26.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) – update (taken out of order of the agenda)

90. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 27 – 36.

The Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer (DCVO) recused herself from the next item and left the meeting

Legislative reform and governance – update (taken out of order of the agenda)

91. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 37 – 47.

The DCVO rejoined the meeting

2025 Draft Annual Report and financial statements (taken out of order of the agenda)

92. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 48 – 54.

Professor Cooper joined the meeting

Veterinary Clinical Careers Pathways (VCCP)

93. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 55 – 79.

Professor Cooper left the meeting

Temporary Registration of Novice Official Veterinarians (TRNOV) Scheme – update

94. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 80 – 82.

Mrs McLaughlan recused herself from the next item and left the meeting

Recruitment of external members – various (private) (taken out of order of the agenda)

95. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 83 – 91.

Mrs McLaughlan rejoined the meeting

Any other College business (confidential items)

Comments on classified appendices from Council or committee meetings

96. There were no comments or questions raised.

Other business

Expenses

97. Council was reminded to submit claims for loss of earnings and expenses as soon as possible post-meeting, in order to comply with the RCVS Expenses Policy. The Culture Effectiveness Group (CEG) had reiterated that expenses should not be signed off after that time without challenge by the Treasurer.

Short notice extra-ordinary Council meetings

98. Council was informed that, as work continued with the CMA's Orders and Undertakings, it was expected that there would be a requirement for some additional short notice extra-ordinary Council meetings over the summer period; staff would provide as much notice as possible, however, they were restricted by the CMA's delivery of documentation and response timescales.

99. It was noted that those extra-ordinary meetings would likely be held in closed session because of the nature of the documentation provided and the CMA's request for it to remain confidential until such time as they made matters publicly available.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

100. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 92.

101. The President brought the meeting to a close.

Annex A

Retiring members at RCVS Day – main contributions

(Membership list is not exhaustive.)

Dr Alice McLeish: Elected July 2023 – May 2026 (three years)

- Standards Committee
- Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee
- VetGDP and Continuing Professional Development Compliance Subcommittee
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group
- Mandatory Practice Regulation Working Group
- Content Management System Project Board

Dr Abbie Calow: Elected July 2022 – July 2026 (four years)

- Vice-Chair, Education Committee
- Registration Committee
- Standards Committee
- Chair, Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice Subcommittee
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy and Compliance Subcommittee
- Post-Nominals Subcommittee
- Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee
- VetGDP and CPD Compliance Subcommittee
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group
- RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees

Dr Olivia Cook: Elected July 2022 – July 2026 (four years)

- Chair, Standards Committee
- Examinations Appeals Subcommittee
- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee (renamed Professional Conduct Liaison Committee)
- Education Committee (Observer)
- Certificate Subcommittee
- Primary Qualifications Subcommittee
- Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Compliance Subcommittee
- Chair, VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group

Mr Derek Bray: Lay appointed July 2018 – July 2026 (eight years)

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Examinations Appeals Committee

- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee (renamed Professional Conduct Liaison Committee)
- Standards Committee
- Estates Strategy Group
- Covid-19 Taskforce

Mr Timothy Walker: Lay appointed July 2018 – July 2026 (eight years)
- Vice-Chair, Examinations Appeals Committee
- Advancement of the Professions Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee (renamed Professional Conduct Liaison Committee)
- Standards Committee
- Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee
- VetGDP and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Compliance Subcommittee
- Chair, Council Culture Working Group (renamed Council Effectiveness Group)
- Chair, Legislative Change Working Group
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group
- Limited Licensure and Reasonable Adjustments Working Party

Dr Susan Paterson: Elected July 2014 – July 2026 (12 years)
- President 2023 – 2024
- Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (including Lead for Environment and Sustainability, and Lead for Leadership)
- Chair, Education Committee (latterly Observer)
- Chair, Nominations Committee
- Chair, Specialist Recognition and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Registration Committee
- Standards Committee
- Veterinary Nurses Council
- Chair, Post-Nominals Subcommittee
- Chair, Vet Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) Subcommittee
- Chair, VetGDP and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Subcommittee
- Recognised Veterinary Practice Subcommittee (renamed Routine Veterinary Practice Subcommittee)
- Chair, Council Culture Working Group (renamed Council Effectiveness Group)
- Chair, Environment and Sustainability Working Party
- Chair, Hardwick Street Refurbishment Group
- Chair, Limited Licensure and Reasonable Adjustments Working Party
- Chair, Mandatory Practice Regulation Working Group
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group
- CPD Referral Group
- Estates Strategy Group
- Graduate Outcomes Working Party
- Legislative Change Working Group

- Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) (RCVS representative on UK Co-ordination Group)
- VetGDP Entrustable Professional Activities Task and Finish Group
- Brexit Taskforce
- Covid-19 Taskforce
- CPD Compliance Panel
- Fellowship Science Advisory Panel
- Officer Team
- RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees
- Vet Futures Project Board

Mr Victor Olowe: Audit and Risk Committee: Lay appointed July 2017 – July 2026 (nine years)

- Member, Audit and Risk Committee 2017-2025
- Chair, Audit and Risk Committee 2025 – 2026

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	26 June – 3 July 2026
Title	**Classified appendix** of the **confidential** remote decision made 26-30 June, and unclassified minutes of the remote decision made 1-2 July, and meeting held 3 July 2026
Summary	**Classified appendix** of the **confidential** remote decision made 26-30 June, and unclassified minutes of the remote decision made 1-2 July, and meeting held 3 July 2026
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix **(confidential)**
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	**Classification**[1]	**Rationales**[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	**Confidential**	**1, 2, 3, 4**

[1]Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Council

Members (per College year 2025 – 2026):

Professor T D H Parkin (in the Chair)
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones
Professor D C Barrett
Miss L S Belton
Dr S E Bennett
Dr S R Bescoby
Mr D Bray
Dr A L Calow
Mr J M Castle
Ms J Clift
Mrs O D R Cook
Ms L Ford
Dr M M S Gardiner
Mr P J Gordon
Dr D L Greenberg
Mr T M Hutchinson
Professor M D Jones
Dr Z J Kennedy
Professor C M Loughrey
Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Dr S Paterson
Miss A C Price
Mr T J Walker
Mrs K Young

Minutes of the confidential remote decision held 26 – 30 June 2026

External examiner report for Aberystwyth / RVC BVSc programme (confidential)

1. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 3.

Minutes of the remote decision held 1 – 2 July 2026

Committee, Subcommittee, Board and Working Party Membership 2026 – 2027

2. Council was asked to approve the committee population allocation for the College year July 2026 – July 2027 as outlined at Annex A to the confidential paper:

For:	16
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	8

3. The allocation was agreed by a majority vote.

[Afternote: Council had been mistakenly informed that it was seven members that had not voted, instead of eight, but following re-checking it was confirmed that eight members had

not voted. That did not change the outcome and the decision remained approved by a majority vote.]

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 3 July 2026 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA (immediately following the Annual General Meeting)

Members (per College year 2026 – 2027):

Professor T D H Parkin (in the Chair)

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Ms H C Grantham
Professor D C Barrett	Dr D L Greenberg
Mr I A Battersby	Mr T M Hutchinson
Miss L S Belton	Professor M D Jones
Dr S E Bennett	Dr Z J Kennedy
Dr S R Bescoby	Professor C M Loughrey
*Mr J M Castle	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Ms J Clift	Miss A C Price
Mrs G Fleming	Dr N C Smith
Ms L Ford	Dr L J Wilson
Dr M M S Gardiner	Mrs K Young
Mr P J Gordon	

*Denotes absent

Apologies for absence

4. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Castle.

5. Dr Middlemiss, Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) – RCVS Council Observer – was not in attendance.

Declaration of interest

6. There were no declarations of interest to report.

Matter for decision by Council

Appointment of the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2026 – 2027

7. Council was asked to approve the appointment of the following members of RCVS Council as the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2026 – 2027:

President:	Mr T M Hutchinson MRCVS
Vice-President:	Professor T D H Parkin FRCVS
Vice-President:	Professor D C Barrett FRCVS
Treasurer:	Miss L S Belton MRCVS

8. The Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2026 – 2027 were approved by a unanimous verbal ‘aye’.

Date of next meeting

9. The next public meeting would be held on Thursday, 3 September 2026, from 10:00 am, in person at RCVS, 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB.

10. The meeting was drawn to a close.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	3 September 2026
Title	CEO operational update
Classification	Unclassified
Decisions required	None
Attachments	Annex A – activity against operational plan 2025-27
Author	Lizzie Lockett, CEO

Classifications		
Document	**Classification**[1]	**Rationales**[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

[1]Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked ‘Draft’.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

CEO update

Format of this update

1. This update falls into two parts:
    a. A summary of recent activities that have been publicised by the College (section below, NB this excludes Disciplinary Hearings)
    b. A summary of more 'behind-the-scenes' activity against the Operational Plan 2025-2027 that was approved by Council in October 2025. This Operational Plan works to meet the ambitions of the RCVS Strategic Plan for 2025-2029: 'Stronger together' (annex one)

2. The table at annex one is only a summary of the ongoing workstreams. Detailed plans are in place, or under development, for any that require such detail. These are overseen by the relevant committee or working party (or Senior Team, if appropriate). If they reach the project threshold, boards will be put in place to oversee them. In some cases, budget has already been allocated, in others, the Discretionary Fund will be used once scoping has taken place.

3. Although this plan appears in the annex as a PDF, it has been moved from Word into Excel and reformatted so it can be sorted by department, to make it easier for relevant committees to see what work falls under their purview. As with previous strategy plan updates, Council receives a report three times a year, in the January, June and September meetings.

Summary of recent activities

6. Since the June 2026 Council meeting, we have:
    a. Responded to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee's report into the future of the veterinary professions
    b. Gathered feedback on the Veterinary AI Transparency Alliance's draft responsible AI use framework
    c. Published a report from our first International Postgraduate Veterinary Education Symposium
    d. Published podcasts on supporting suicide prevention and shaping the future of the veterinary nursing profession, and an interview with new President, Tim Hutchinson
    e. Published our annual report and held our AGM and Awards Day (RCVS Day)
    f. Launched a new Academy course to support witnesses in disciplinary hearings, and one for practices welcoming overseas-qualified VNs
    g. Held a parliamentary event to garner support for an updated Veterinary Surgeons Act, jointly with the British Veterinary Association and the British Veterinary Nursing Association
    h. Attended the Royal Norfolk Show, to communicate the role of the College to the public and promote veterinary careers
    i. Welcomed Defra's White Paper on the reform of veterinary regulation
    j. Held elections for two places on the RCVS Fellowship Board – with Professor Anna Meredith and Dr Emma Milne being re-elected to the posts of Chair of the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel, and Projects and Engagement Officer, respectively.
    k. Supported the publication of a Mind-Matters-funded study into alcohol use in UK veterinary practice, and announced funding of a new study into mental health and trauma support after severe occupational injury

l. Hosted a VN Educators Conference at Hardwick Street
m. Launched our new customer relationship management system and an enhanced Find a Vet service
n. Published new research on a future vet nurse prescriber role
o. Welcomed 39 new Fellows to the College
p. Carried out a series of workshops on the proposed specialism in general practice

Decisions required

4. No decisions are required, but feedback is always welcomed, both on content and format of this report.

Annex A – activity against agreed Operational Plan 2025-2027

Key Deliverables	Desired Impact	Measured By	Lead	Department	Due Date	Status	Comment/Funding Source
A: Stronger together with veterinary professionals							
Ambition: we will support veterinary professionals to succeed in meeting high standards in their chosen careers. We will champion accessible, team-based veterinary care, delivered in settings that support professional autonomy and leadership.							
1. Achieving new veterinary legislation, including team-based veterinary care and practice regulation							
Progress of RCVS policy proposals for legislative reform	Work with Defra and other stakeholders on developing new legislation to ensure as far as possible that the legislation enables RCVS regulatory objectives	If legislation is produced – it is effective and efficient for the protection of animals and public	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	Ongoing	Ongoing	Currently absorbed by Legal and Policy (Exec Office) teams
Being able to charge for UK accreditations so that there is sufficient funding to ensure effective operation in a landscape of increasing demand	UK accreditation becomes cost neutral, or reduced burden on members fee income	New legislation/ Budget Data	Dir Ed	Education	2027 Q2	Early stages	Awaiting legislative reform discussions
Ability to explore options for limited licensure	Increased diversity within the veterinary profession	New legislation Diversity (disability) statistics of the profession (long term impact)	Dir Ed	Education	2027 Q2	Not started	If this becomes a possibility, extensive risk analysis required around wider limited licensure policy (beyond disability related) Also relevant under A2 (use of data). Awaiting legislative reform discussions
Vets and nurses unable to renew their registration unless they are CPD (or VetGDP) compliant	Increase CPD (and VetGDP) compliance to ensure that all vets on the practising category of the Register are up to date and able to provide the best service and care possible	Increased CPD and VetGDP compliance of the profession	Dir Ed	Education	2027 Q2	Not started (although team continues to work to improve compliance in absence of new legislation)	This needs to be based on RCVS analysis of 1CPD/VetGDP data, not a self-declaration from members
Working towards compliance with Standards of Good Regulation where applicable	Ensure that the RCVS meet the standards for good regulation as set out by the PSA, as far as they are applicable. Ensure that RCVS is prepared for new legislative framework.	RCVS meet PSA Standards as evidenced by PSA audit.	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	2027 Q4	Early stages - made some changes to legal and governance to improve accountability.	Currently absorbed by legal team
Effective preparation for new legislative regime	Ensure that the RCVS can prepare effectively for new legislation	Plan for preparation – including a realistic assessment of set up and ongoing costs.	CEO	Executive	2025 Q3	White paper published July, costs under development but more information required	Currently absorbed by Legal and Policy (Exec Office) teams
2. Improving the way in which we use data to improve monitoring and enforcement of veterinary standards							

Targeted research of non-clinical staff to better understand the issues they face	Develop a programme of support, resources and/or training to enhance knowledge, skills and/or behaviours	To be determined	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q3	In progress	Research questions have been added to the British Veterinary Receptionists Association annual survey, to understand areas of concern, where MMI may be able to develop resources/training in 2027/28. Results will be made available in autumn.
Publish anonymised UK VetGDP survey data (graduate outcomes)	Demonstrate to the profession (and public) the quality of graduates from RCVS-accredited programmes	Longitudinal survey data from 2020 onwards	Dir Ed	Education	2027 Q1	Ongoing	No additional budget needed
Review the effectiveness of the outcomes-based CPD policy through the analysis of 1CPD and VetGDP portfolio data on reflection	Vets and nurses are supported to be competent, reflective practitioners	Data analysis of CPD reflections using a quality framework	Dir Ed/Postgrad Lead	Education	2027 Q1	Aug 26 update: Quality criteria going to EC in Sept	CPD / VetGDP compliance also monitored – see 'BAU' below.
Review and enhance information and data provided to public on Practice Standards Scheme (PSS)	Public and practices are better informed about practices and what is good practice	Information is provided regularly Feedback suggests public are better informed	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2025 Q4	Not started	Put on hold pending outcome of PSS review which has been delayed due to CMA/VSA
Review the way data is used to enhance effectiveness to identify themes that emerge from concerns and complaints	RCVS work is better targeted to address areas of concern	Effective process for data collection, cascading information and policy measures introduced	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	2026 Q2	Policy and framework is complete. Implementation by end Sept 26	IT assistance may be required; also working with Research Team (PP&I)
Implementing user journeys and task-based communications across MyRCVS and other RCVS digital platforms, eg 1CPD, VetGDP etc once integrated into CRM (Phase 2)	Comprehensive oversight of all additional direct communications to vets/VNs. Targeting vets/VNs with information that is relevant/useful to them at any given moment, to help drive compliance with professional obligations	Evaluation through metrics available via new CRM.	Marketing Campaigns Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	To start, as part of CRM Phase 2	
3. Reviewing the Codes of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance, and how they are understood, complied with and enforced							
Schedule 3 and delegation resource pack	To ensure all vet professionals have a clear / shared understanding of what can be legally / safely delegated and how to apply it consistently in team-based practice	Pre/post surveys, feedback forms, focus groups. Quick reference guides, decision flowcharts, case studies and scenarios, training pack, checklists and templates along with FAQs.	VNC/VN Team (& Standards and Advice team)	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q3	Early stages	Research performed to gain input from the wider profession on the cultural, practical and resource elements of implementation. The timeline has expanded due to the complexity of the project. See line 28.

Continue the review of "Under Care"	Finalised code/guidance for "Under Care"	Production of final guidance/code	Registrar/Head of S&A	Legal	2026 Q3		Research is ongoing by Vet Compass which is delayed. S&A team are preparing a survey for the profession.
Finalised Code and guidance following review	Production of final guidance/code, including website functionality and/or other comms platforms	Feedback in consultation. Website metrics, user feedback, online language tools, AI tools Improved content, content design and functionality to increased accessibility and discoverability for users.	Registrar/Head of S&A Comms Director	Legal	2027 Q4	Not started	
Full review of the Charter Case Committee	Finalised CCC review and any updated guidance documents (if req)	Production of final review paper for Council and updated documents etc	Head of ProfCon/Registrar	Legal	2025 Q4	Completed	Absorbed by legal team
Vets and VNs are CPD (or VetGDP) compliant	Increase CPD (and VetGDP) compliance to ensure that vets and VNs on the practising category of the Register are up to date & able to provide the best service and care possible.	Increased CPD and VetGDP compliance of the profession	Dir of Ed with input from Dir of VN	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing - data for 2025 shows an increase	Aim to increase within the constraints of current Act (see also Aim 1 above for new legislation). Current KPI 80% - not yet met for vets.
Establishing strategy for VS and VNs who are non-CPD-compliant	CPD requirements are adhered to by professionals (as far as possible)	Fewer breaches of CPD	Registrar/Head of Legal – Ed and Reg	Education	2026 Q3	Education Cttee reviewed the draft policy, now with Practice Standards Team.	
Review of VN Registration Rules	To ensure the rules remain fit for purpose and align with education, regulation, and clinical practice requirements	Registration data and trends	VNC/ Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q4	Early stages	Amended draft due to be considered at the November 2026 VNC meeting.
4. Working through Mind Matters and other initiatives, to achieve a veterinary workforce that meets demand, and an inclusive culture in which professionals can thrive, without fear of discrimination or harassment							
Develop a revised definition of veterinary nursing	Elevate the profession's status, clarify the unique and critical role and foster a stronger professional identity. Aid employers and policy makers in making informed decisions around responsibilities.	Various team surveys, pre/post implementation focus groups, exit interviews and turnover/retention rates. Better retention, job satisfaction and workforce planning.	VNC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2026 Q4	Early stages	Task and finish group in the process of being set-up
Strengthening the role of RVNs in team-based veterinary healthcare	Improved patient outcomes, increased job satisfaction and retention along with better team collaboration and efficiency of workflows.	Logic model to guide measurement. Surveys and focus groups. Better use of nursing skills, clearer delegation and improved team collaboration.	VNC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Ongoing	This work is aligned with the Schedule 3 and delegation resource pack - see line 19. Thematic analysis of data and development of a Theory of Change is underway.
Publish guide on creating safe events and congresses	Develop guidance for event organisers on how to create events that keep people psychologically safe.	Feedback, surveys	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Final stages (delayed)	Collaborative effort with MMI Taskforce members. Guide has been delayed due to competing priorities for Taskforce members as well as the MMI team. Drafting is now complete and is currently with the design team. The next stage will be developing the evaluation and impact with Taskforce members' event organisers.

Tailored Adjustment Passport (TAP) Toolkit (previously Health Passport toolkit) and template for use by employees, students and organisations (workplaces/placement providers and educational institutions)	Better individualised support for people with disabilities and chronic conditions in the workplace or in education and training	Adoption of TAPs by organisations, feedback from VSC and employers, and DCIS survey respondents	D&I in collaboration with Ed & VN teams, & external educators	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Final stages (delayed)	Delayed due to further changes resulting from feedback, but it has been decided that the toolkit will be piloted before it is available to the sector. Pilot will launch Q4 2026 / Q1 2027. Allocated budget in 2026, will need further budget for promotion in 2027 when released to the wider professions following the pilot.
Development of EDI Fundamentals course on RCVS Academy	Increased knowledge and awareness of equality legislation, key concepts and good practice	RCVS Academy data – NP scores, evaluation survey feedback etc.	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q1	on-going	Stakeholder input and legal checks needed to ensure appropriate risk management, therefore launch is delayed to Q1 2027. This course consists of three modules. Module one is complete, two and three are in progress.
Development of inclusive language document	Updated knowledge of EDI language & terminology (to complement the above)	Number of downloads (baseline) but will be more specific once the document is finalised.	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Final stages	Revisions delayed release. Now being prepared for publication in September 2026 subject to legal check. Included in 2026 resourcing and budget. May require further promotion or support during 2027 depending on uptake, feedback and understanding.
Inclusive recruitment toolkit	Greater awareness of inclusive Recruitment practices to increase diversity within the vet workforce	Social media & web stats. Implementation of guidance by organisations, stakeholder feedback	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q2	Delayed til Q2 2027	This project has been rescheduled due to prioritisation of work on TAP toolkit, EDI Fundamentals, and Inclusive language guide. Will be included 2027 budget
Guidance for supporting neurodivergent students on placements	Improved experience and better support in place for neurodivergent students on placements/work-based learning	Implementation of guidance & feedback from VSC, employers & DCIS survey student respondents. Survey of attendees & DCIS to look at impact/use	D&I	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q3	Delayed - now Q4	Delayed to Q3 2027 to accommodate tender process, guidance development and building the dedicated web pages. Project requirements and invitation to tender currently being developed ready for autumn publication. Included in 2026 budget. Will be done in collaboration with the VN and Education Teams but research and writing of the resources will be outsourced to external expert due to other priorities across Leadership and EDI.

Veterinary Leadership Development project: Leadership Framework and research project	Support building leadership capacity & healthy organisational cultures by ensuring leaders at all levels are equipped with necessary skills and competencies. Suggested change to: "Informing College's leadership development provision and supporting leadership capacity within the professions."	Adoption of framework. Other measures will depend on what emerges from the research to allow us to measure impact	Leadership	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q2	Delayed - now Q2 2027	Phase 1 focus groups have now been completed. Development of framework will commence in autumn 2026 based on focus group feedback. Phase 2 leadership survey design will commence in Q1 and launch Q2 2027 Included in budget 2026 and budget plan for 2027.
5. Supporting veterinary professionals' appropriate use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies, to optimise positive impact, support growth and mitigate any risks							
Consideration of how tech can be better utilised in practice eg, through provision of kennel feeds, updates via WhatsApp or portal etc	Developing animal-owner-vet relationship, increasing trust between vet practices/profession and animal-owning public	To be developed once project more advanced	VN Futures	Veterinary Nursing	TBC		Idea came out of VN Vision project. Was decided to not progress this any further. No further reporting. Keeping on this table for completeness.
Development of a set of standards by the AI industry that vet professionals can use to help inform decision making	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to animal health and welfare (AH&W)	Number of developers to engage	CEO/Head of S&A/ CDO	Executive	Timetable will be developed once sense of likely update and funding routes established	Draft framework developed and plan under development	Framework has been out for feedback, largely positive. Oral update coming to Standards Sept and proposal to November meeting.
RCVS guidance on how veterinary professionals should engage with AI and other new tech	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to AH&W	Engagement with AI and low levels of complaints/ concerns about veterinary professional judgement	Head of S&A	Legal	Completed	Completed	Guidance published Q1 2026, likely to be updated following outcome of project above.
Development of an Academy Course to upskill veterinary professionals to understand AI principles and what to look for in a service they may look to use	Enabling intelligence-led, risk-based judgements to be made, reducing risk to AH&W	Engagement with course, engagement with AI and low levels of complaints/ concerns about veterinary professional judgement	Academy	Academy	Due date will be part of timetable described above	Not yet started	May be able to use some ViVet funding for any external contributions required
6. Ensuring our educational standards and career pathways meet the diverse needs of society and the professions							
Set and maintain robust standards of vet education (accreditation standards and 'day one competences')	Vets entering the profession are equipped with the knowledge and skills to practise safely and effectively from day one	VetGDP surveys (graduate outcomes data) Vet programmes meet accred stds / longer accreditation periods.	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Updated D1C planned for Ed Cttee in Sept or November	

Review scope of practice for veterinary nurses	Veterinary nurses entering the profession are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to practise safely from day one.	Curriculum reviews and self-evaluation report analysis. Quality monitoring reports.	VNEC/Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Early stages	The first interactive workshop was successfully delivered on 17 June 2026 and marked the beginning of engagement on the Scope of Practice Review. The workshop deliberately focused on designing the engagement process rather than the review outcomes, inviting participants to consider who should be involved, what questions need to be explored, the most appropriate methods for collecting evidence and perspectives, potential barriers to participation, and how to ensure the review is credible, inclusive and future-focused.
Review Specialist application policy from EU/US	To ensure all specialists on the register meet the standard required of UK specialists	Review report to demonstrate level 8 FHEQ criteria met	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q3	Proposal approved by EC May 2026, and approved by Council June 26. Initial discussions held with European Board of Veterinary Specialists (EBVS) August 26.	
Implement a framework for the QA of postgraduate certificate modules delivered both through RCVS (CertAVP) and other providers	Ensure all routes to RCVS Advanced Practitioner status are equitable and set at the appropriate standard	QA outcomes of modules and certificates	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q1	Complete - implemented by the Advanced Practitioner Qualifications subcommittee. First external programme approved at EC May 26	
Development of clear guidance for all roles and statuses both for the profession and the public	Increase understanding of the clinical career pathways and the roles within the veterinary team	Research data, following implementation (with profession and public)	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Proposal approved by EC May 2026, to be considered by Council June 26. May now need to be revisited as a new AVP acronym has appeared in the Defra White Paper - going to EC in Sept for discussion.	In budget
Development of a new specialty training programme in Veterinary Primary Care/General Practice	Improve engagement, retention and job satisfaction within veterinary General Practice Improve dissemination of best practice through primary care clinical research	Proposal to RCVS Council Consultation with the profession	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Proposal approved by EC May 2026, and by Council June 26. Phase 1 consultation complete mid-August. Full consultation planned Oct.	In budget for 2025
Develop and improve accessible routes to specialist training	To support a wider demographic to enter the profession at this level, in particular those with caring responsibilities or financial limitations. Increase accessibility of specially training while maintaining high quality outcomes	Proposal to RCVS Council Consultation with the profession	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Proposal approved by EC May 2026, and by Council June 26. Initial discussions held with EBVS August - ongoing.	In budget for 2025 - carried forward

Review the Statutory Membership Exam to ensure it remains reliable and sustainable in light of increasing candidate numbers	To maintain a valid, reliable and fair approach that is accessible to increasing numbers of overseas vets.	Psychometric evaluation of the exam components. Accommodation of increasing candidate numbers	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q3	Ongoing - awaiting timeline for analysis by psychometrician	Implementation required one-year lead-in time. Awaiting timeline for analysis from psychometrician
Development of a veterinary nursing advanced practitioner role/status and prescriber role	To raise clinical standards, enhance career progression, contribute to improved workforce sustainability, and ultimately improve patient outcomes and client experience.	Consultation with the profession	Dir of VN	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Ongoing	The June workshop explored the key questions that should inform future consideration of enhanced and advanced veterinary nursing practice within the Scope of Practice Review. Discussions focused on the evidence needed, stakeholder engagement and how best to develop a robust, future-focused approach. Alongside this work, published research exploring the feasibility of a future veterinary nurse prescriber role is informing the Scope of Practice Review and contributing to the evidence base for future legislative reform.
A valid, reliable and authentic practical assessment method for the RCVS Day One Skills in Veterinary Nursing which predicts future performance	Improved confidence of newly registered veterinary nurses in clinical settings. Potential reduction in stress amongst students and educators. Confidence in the outcome of assessments.	Outcome of quality monitoring reports. Stakeholder feedback. Qualification success and retention rates.	VNEC, VN Exam team	Veterinary Nursing	2029 Q4	Early stages	The first PAVE stakeholder workshop was successfully delivered at the VN Educator conference in June 2026. The workshop introduced the project and explored the sustainability and future relevance of current mandatory practical assessment methods. Through facilitated group discussions, delegates considered which aspects of practical assessment work well, where change may be needed, and a range of potential future approaches, including simulated examinations, workplace-based assessment, and frameworks for recording and evidencing assessment outcomes. The workshop forms part of a wider programme of stakeholder engagement events, which are currently being planned.
7. Supporting and engaging with veterinary and veterinary nursing students to help them better understand the role of the College and their responsibilities as future veterinary professionals							
The provision of a National EMS booking database to support students to secure appropriate placements	UK vet students able to find, book and communicate with EMS placement providers relevant to their personal needs (including WP students)	All students registered and using the EMS database	U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026	Discontinued	Update November 2025, Education Committee agreed to disband the database due to lack of engagement from vet schools. No further reporting. Will stay on plan for completeness.

Foster a positive relationship between vet and VN students and the RCVS	Links a name with a physical presence, strengthening the RCVS/ student relationship, reducing fear factor, increasing engagement	TBC	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	Ongoing	Ongoing	Will involve many depts
Raise awareness of, and engagement with, VetGDP	Ensure that graduates are aware of VetGDP when they join the register and start their first role	Engagement data	Dir of Ed and P/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Data being collected to present to Education Committee in September	Data going to EC September 26
Reviewing the Registration Service Standards	Improved service to registrants and clearer information	Reduction in queries timeframes	Head of Reg & Head of Customer Services	Operations	2026 Q3	Not started	May be delayed due to workload (new CRM, CMA etc)
B: Stronger together with animal owners and keepers							
Ambition: we will support animal health and welfare and public health by enabling access to veterinary care that is informed by the needs of consumers and service users.							
1. Achieving new legislation that enables us to better meet the needs of users of veterinary services							
Mini review of PSS – taking into account Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) preliminary findings	Introduce some targeted standards for practices to enhance transparency for animal owners to protect animal health and welfare	Standards are amended to introduce targeted measures	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2026 Q1/Q2	Completed	
Full review of PSS	PSS reviewed to ensure it is effective and proportionate	Reviewed standards consulted on and implemented	Registrar/Head of PSS	Legal	2027 Q3	On target to present revised standards to Council in November	Absorbed by legal team
Development of Quality Improvement Model in PSS	Ensure practices can demonstrate high quality in key areas & animal owners understand framework	Development and finalisation of model	Registrar/ Head of PSS	Legal	2027 Q2	Not started	Budget for external consultant may be required
Review/introduction of processes in ProfCon that provide support to witnesses/registrants pre-Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) including sexual misconduct guidance	Witnesses are supported to provide their best evidence. Registrants are appropriately supported through the DC process.	Output – relevant guidance and information available. Feedback from witnesses and registrants	Registrar/Head of ProfCon	Legal	2026 Q3	Academy course available for registrants. Support on website for witnesses is delayed.	Comms assistance required
Review of materials and processes in Disciplinary Committee (DC) to ensure witnesses/registrants are supported.	Witnesses are supported to provide their best evidence. Registrants are appropriately supported through the DC process	Output – relevant guidance and information available. Feedback from witnesses and registrants	Registrar/Head of Legal – Ed &Reg	Legal	2026 Q3	Not started	Comms assistance required

Working towards potential RCVS involvement with any CMA remedies	RCVS interests are represented, and RCVS legal obligations and limitations are clearly understood	RCVS support CMA in a proportionate way that does not adversely impact other objectives.	Registrar/Head of Legal – legal support/Head of Legal PSS	Legal	Orders to be published Sept 2026 latest	Funding Order and Undertakings published; substantive Order to be published by 23 September	Funding Order provides for us to invoice for levy
2. Forging trust between the veterinary professions, the College and animal owners and keepers, and supporting their needs							
Ensure members of the public understand the role of veterinary nurses.	The public see veterinary nurses as trusted, skilled professionals who play a crucial role in animal health and welfare, leading to stronger collaboration, better care, and improved patient outcomes	Surveys and questionnaires, client feedback and recognition levels.	VNC/Dir of VN/Dir Comms	Veterinary Nursing	2027 Q4	Early stages	This is aligned with strengthening the role of RVNs in team-based healthcare. Need to develop clear, consistent communication strategies and key messaging. Visible campaigns and real-life stories. A session is being held with the RCVS Public Advisory Group in September 2026.
Modern D1C & accreditation standards that ensure undergrad vet programmes are informed by stakeholder feedback & best pedagogical practice	Graduates are equipped with the relevant skills to practise and meet clients' needs	Accreditation data Stakeholder Feedback	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Plan to bring to Education Committee September 26 [may be November if September focus is training]
Ensure that postgraduate education supports vets in developing professional skills, meeting clients' needs	Addresses CMA report Updates VetGDP framework, CertAVP modules and CPD	Stakeholder feedback Updated educational content	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Complete - VetGDP framework updated and contextualised care embedded within proposed GP specialty training	To include transparency & pricing, contextualised care etc. Plans are for updated proposals around each area to go to EC in September
3. Supporting and informing service users in order to get the best from veterinary professionals, with increased transparency, agency and choice							
Development of clear guidance for all roles and statuses (GP vet, Advanced Practitioner, Specialist) both for the profession and the public	Increase understanding of the clinical career pathways and the roles within the veterinary team	Research data, following implementation (with profession and public)	Dir of Ed and PG Ed Lead	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing - approved by Council in June but may need to be revisited in light of AVP acronym in White Paper	Proposal to be approved by Council June 26
Enhanced Find a Vet Service	Greater transparency for consumers	User satisfaction with website, completeness of data	IT/Digital, Comms, Registration	IT	2026 Q1 - first phase now June 2026 to align with CRM launch	Ongoing	Further new functionality is expected to be delivered as part of the CMA requirements. Joint project with Marketing and Communications
Review and update animal owner help and advice, to include that for equine and livestock owners.	Enable more users of veterinary services to understand mutual responsibilities and to what to expect from their practice teams.	Website traffic metrics, user feedback, SEO and GEO rankings	Head of Media and Content	Comms	2026 Q3	To start building on current content	

4. Considering ways in which those accessing veterinary care could be better supported, by better understanding the human-animal bond and the role of animals in society, for example, exploring the role of pet bereavement counselling as part of our complaint resolution process, or the veterinary social work concept							
Pilot pet bereavement counselling service	Offer greater support to animal owners during the complaint resolution process	Satisfaction data at end of process – will need to establish baseline too	Registrar/ProfCon/Mind Matters/ CEO	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Not started - pushed back as not key priority given CMA etc	Will require specialist input, baseline research – discretionary funding to pilot thereafter in budget.
Pilot animal owner complaints process navigation service to help them better understand the process and their options from the start	Improve animal owner satisfaction with an understanding of the process, reduce number of out-of-scope concerns logged	Satisfaction data; number of out-of-scope complaints	Registrar/Head of ProfCon	Legal	2026 Q4	Not started	Discretionary fund request
5. Taking regular feedback and working to improve our services and communications to animal owners and keepers							
A well-functioning Public Advisory Group that includes a good spread of different types of animal owners	Meaningful insight that can inform policy and help improve services offered	Engagement and usable insight	CEO	Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing	Recruitment for new members completed and onboarding taken place.
Improved public consultation process that seeks input in a more proactive way	Better client and public engagement with activities and improved output	Amount of engagement – numbers TBC	Head of PI&PA	Comms	Ongoing	Not started	New plan needs to be developed.
Adding standard to PSS to ensure practices gather client feedback and close the loop by communicating changes	Improved trust, reduced complaints on matters that should have been resolved at practice level	Positive feedback in future surveys	Head of PSS/Registrar	Legal	TBC	TBC	This may be addressed via PSS review or may be via CMA Order, TBC
C: Stronger together with society at large							
Ambition: we will champion the role that veterinary professionals play in One Health and public health, take a leadership role on environmental sustainability and biodiversity, and continue to look beyond our domestic horizons to have a positive impact upon the world around us.							
1. Collaborating and holding space for conversation on challenging issues, such as the role of animals in society, the responsibilities of animal owners/keepers, and the cost of veterinary care							

Collaborating with Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) regarding Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PiE)	Ensure that the outcome of the VMD work takes into account RCVS insight and data	At this stage – constructive collaboration	Registrar/ Head of S&A	Legal	TBC	Started Q3 2025	VMD scoping the work presently; recent House of Lords report has shone a light on the issues.
Seeking to address current knowledge gaps within the professions	Being a trusted source of information to the profession and wider healthcare professions	Number of visits to page, its practical use and referencing	Fellowship	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	In progress	Project is progressing
Series of RCVS debates at Hardwick Street – using Fellowship where appropriate	An opportunity for the professions to have a space to discuss and debate issues that matter to them	Attendance and output of any resources (and their utilisation)	Fellowship, Exec and Policy	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q2	In progress	Wide variety of topics being looked at from role of the professionals, to specific welfare issues across the species, sustainability and environment. May need DF application depending on uptake. First in-person debates will take place on Fellowship Day, allowing us to test the format and refine before online debates are held.
2. Articulating the contribution of veterinary professionals, and interrogating the evolving rights and responsibilities of professionals in today's society							
Disaster Response resources	Highlighting how blue light services, human health etc need to work together for animal welfare	Acceptance and use of guidelines by blue light services and vet professionals where appropriate. ideally official endorsement by professional bodies	Fellowship in collab with BARTA	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	Completed	Pain relief guide (translation of BARTA Large Animal into SA) launched Q4 2025, new T&F group established and started work Q1 2026 with final resources due Q3. Meeting to take place at Hardwick Street Oct 2026.
3. Championing the veterinary role in One Health, by ensuring the veterinary voice is heard and that the next generation of veterinary professionals are equipped to contribute							
Development of Environment and Sustainability plan to include sustainability plan for the professions, educational resources, alongside internal policies and processes eg new travel plan, food procurement policy etc	College has confidence that it is doing all that it can to reduce environmental footprint and support veterinary professionals to do the same	Metrics to be developed out of new plan	E&S team (across AP and PIPA)	Advancement of the Professions / PIPA	2027 Q4	Early stage	Details of internal plan (including iiE accreditation) and external plan (in line with UKHACC commitments) to be brought to October 2026 APC for comment and approval.

Fellowship Science Advisory Panel (FSAP) Sustainability Task and Finish Group (TAFG)	To encourage veterinary professionals to consider more sustainable options in everyday practice	For each resource or activity, use and engagement will be measured, feedback will be collected and then reflected in future iterations to ensure content is useful and meeting needs	Fellowship / PIPA	Advancement of the Professions	2027 Q1	Early stage	Workshop (Climate Fresk) undertaken by APC in Feb 26. Further plans by PIPA to bring UKHACC papers to Oct 26 APC, to agree on actions for the College / Fellowship, Council in November if necessary and then the T&F will be formed if appropriate Workshop planned for February APC following UKHACC discussion in Nov Council. T&F will then be formed to look at next steps
4. Ensuring that veterinary professionals specifically responsible for public health are well supported with robust standards and safeguards							
Academy Farm to Fork course	Better inform Council and cttees on public health issues	Engagement with course and feedback	Head of Academy	Academy	2025 Q3	Completed	Course being reviewed for update one year on.
Limited licensure within new Act	Increase number of public health professionals on the Register	Number able via limited licensure route	Head of PIPA	PIPA	Dependent on new legislation, earliest into force c.late 2028	Ongoing	
5. Lighting a fire of enthusiasm for veterinary work in the minds of the next generation of potential professionals, so we continue to better reflect the society that we serve							
Programme of outreach at events, and speaking opportunities at schools delivered by RCVS personnel and Outreach Ambassadors	Engagement with school-age children, particularly those from backgrounds where veterinary may not be an obvious career choice	Numbers with whom we have engaged, feedback from events, trackable website activity,	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
Educational resources for use at Hardwick Street and external events, including collaborations with existing producers/suppliers.	Engagement with school-age children, particularly those from backgrounds where veterinary may not be an obvious career choice	Numbers with whom we have engaged, feedback from events, trackable website activity, distribution of materials	Outreach & Engagement Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Some resources exist but need refresh and use within Hardwick Street to be considered
Re-introduce attendance at public-facing events, such as country shows, science festivals etc	To raise awareness of the RCVS, its role/remit, and the responsibilities of vets/owners Also, raise awareness of veterinary careers amongst parents, carers, teachers etc	Attendance figures, engagement metrics, giveaways, trackable website activity	Events Manager	Comms	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Team attended Royal Norfolk Show (Jun) and plan to attend New Scientist Live (Oct)
6. Building the College’s reputation overseas and investigating opportunities to scale and supply relevant initiatives and services, in the interests of animal health and welfare							

Continue to engage with International Accreditors Working Group, to deliver accreditation with global partners more sustainably	Learning from and influencing international best practice	IAWG meeting actions 'Sustainable accreditation' pilot	Dir of Ed	Education	2026 Q4	Ongoing	RCVS attended IAWG meeting in July 26 - online, hosted by EAEVE.
Accreditation of more overseas programmes	Increased number of overseas vet grads eligible to register	Number of international accredited programmes	Dir of Ed and U/G Ed Lead	Education	2028 Q1	Ongoing - continuing to invite EAEVE accredited schools, but little uptake to date. Proposal to ask EAEVE to join in a MOU going to EC in September	Estimates put in budget each year
Continued engagement with EU through ENQA	Learning from & contributing to international best practice	ENQA accreditation	Ed QI Manager	Education	2027 Q1	Ongoing	
Develop an international community of practice for postgraduate vet education (PGVE) inc. annual symposium	Learning from and influencing international best practice. Increased focus on PGVE may benefit professional career dev, trust & satisfaction	Stakeholder feedback following 2025 symposium Proposal for COP	Dir of Ed	Education	2027 Q4	Proceedings from first event published on website. Planning for a follow up event in 2027 underway now, as a result of requests from stakeholders	Aim to develop a longer-term network with continued engagement from RCVS
Continue to engage with bodies such as World Veterinary Association, Commonwealth Veterinary Association, International Veterinary Regulators Network etc	Positive network to learn from, to influence and to call on for support on cross-cutting issues where required	Interaction and engagement	CEO, Head of PIPA, Officers	Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing	CEO attended EAEVE in May. President attended AVMA Congress in July. CEO attending AAVSB Congress in September; CEO, head of PIPA and Councils reps attending FVE in November. RCVS taking over secretariat of IVRN shortly and hosting in-person meeting in June 2027.
MMI International work	Joint collaboration with American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and other signatories to share research and best practice, advocacy for mental health	TBC	MMI	Advancement of the Professions	2026 Q4	ongoing	The team is planning for a series of MMI Vital Transitions events to take place in 2026/early 2027. Events will focus on the transitions from education to early career professionals. DF will be needed, as this was not included in 2026 budget currently. Initial online plenary event planned for 30 September. Regional events are currently being planned.
7. Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street							

Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street eg open day, school visits, supporting local charities, understanding local issues	Build relationships with our neighbours and improve environmental sustainability in the area	Positive communication with our neighbours and introducing environmental improvement	Facilities Team/ Student Engagement Manager	Operations	Ongoing	Have engaged with most local practice and invited them to attend staff away day in April to meet the team.	Relationships take time to build up, this is not a start and finish deliverable, but a longer-term objective. Plan needs development.
D: Stronger together with our staff team and governance							
Ambition: we will attract and retain the diversity of talent and skills to deliver what's needed now and anticipate what might be next, building a culture that allows people to thrive, whether staff, Council or other contributors to our purpose.							
1. Achieving new legislation that allows for the right skills and structure for effective governance							
New legislation that allows for best practice in regulatory governance	Trust, effectiveness, good decision making	Board effectiveness review; public and professional trust (surveys)	Head of PIPA	PIPA	TBC	Ongoing	Working with Registrar and CEO
2. Developing an infrastructure for success, including our new headquarters, and underpinning structures for finance, communications and digital							
Continuous improvement of customer relationship management system (CRM)	Streamlined and enhanced process for portal and CRM users	User satisfaction/Self-service/fewer enquiries	CDO and Project Office	IT	2026 end Q2	Final stages	CRM went live in summer, ongoing teething issues being addressed. Phase 2 of related development to focus on CMA requirements.
Design, build and implementation of new RCVS website, with improved CRM integration for MyRCVS.	Online content that is discoverable, accessible, relevant, useful and informative. Good practice information architecture, functionality and integrations	Website traffic metrics, user feedback, online polls	Head of Marcoms	IT	2026 Q4	Currently on track and on budget	Updated FAV launched over summer. Ongoing development will now relate to CMA requirements
Roll-out of new brand and visual identity	To help make the RCVS more understandable and recognisable for all stakeholders across all activities and communications channels, and to provide flexibility for the future	Measurement of stakeholder awareness through surveys, polls, feedback etc	Head of Marcoms	IT	2026 Q1	Launched Q3 2025	Some ongoing work in terms of Hardwick Street visuals
Developing and implementing our next communication strategy to align with the new Strategic Plan	To support greater stakeholder understanding of our role and remit, greater awareness of our services and activities, and to build on levels of engagement and trust in what we do	Specific evaluation methods to be included in strategy as appropriate, but may include direct feedback, surveys, focus groups, media monitoring, digital metrics etc	Coms Director	Comms	2026 Q2	Delayed	Draft to go to Officers in September

Consider and launch new RCVS communications channels	Help to inform and engage harder-to-reach stakeholder groups, and provide additional ways for them to receive our content	Subscription levels, user uptake and engagement metrics	Head of Media & Content	Comms	2025 Q4	In October 2025, WhatsApp channel launched (now c.400 followers) and RCVS podcast relaunched (now c.250 followers, and c.1,750 downloads)	
Design, develop and build new intranet for staff team	To keep all teams up to date with internal/external activities, staff initiatives and policies, and to help build staff engagement	Staff feedback, surveys, questions, team meetings etc	People Director & Coms Director	People	2026 Q3	Ongoing	Internal Feedback Group created and met twice. Likely a phased transition from existing hub 'RCVS.me'
Suite of AI assistants delivered and in use	Time saved, greater efficiency	Adoption, estimate of time saved	CDO	IT	2026 Q4	Early stages	Pilot ongoing.
New HR Management system (HRM)/Payroll	Integrated services, greater efficiency and reliability. Production of relevant and timely information for Staff team, RCVS Council and committees. To reduce payroll processing time and staff able to access relevant information and documents	Time saved, greater efficiency. Managements accounts produced on time and annual accounts before the audit. Payroll has fewer queries and less manual input.	CDO, Dir Ops, Dir People	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Mini specification drawn up and work had started on issues listed but now subject to some delays due to focus on CRM launch and CMA-related work
Continuous improvement of apps (1CPD, VetGDP etc)	Ongoing enhancement	Phased software releases	CDO	IT	2026 Q4	Ongoing	Ongoing enhancements have been regularly delivered throughout 2025 and will continue in 2026 and beyond
Continuous assessment of the skills and competencies required to deliver College strategy	Employees doing great work, which is appropriately challenging	External view of deliverables, feedback from Council and committees and delivery of the People/payroll budget	People Director with support from CEO and Senior Team	People	2026 Q3	Ongoing	Limited progress made due to focus on CRM
Managing financial resources appropriately	Planning the use of financial resources for activities agreed by the organisation	Planned activities carried out when expected, and not delayed due to lack of finances	FRC – Dir Ops	Operations	Ongoing		To be included in the budget process.
Review of legal advice team and framework at RCVS. Implement clear framework for delivery of legal support to RCVS	Clarity around the framework for the provision of legal advice. QA processes.	Processes are clear and defined. Legal advice is provided in a proportionate and cost-effective way and used effectively	Registrar/ Dir LS	Legal	Early stages	Have started evidence gathering	
Governance review/production of governance handbook	Clarity for RCVS around governance and policies of the college – transparency for public	Produce a governance manual setting out	Council Secretary/Governance Manager	Operations	2025 Q4 - running late	Ongoing	Presented to ARC for comment 12.05.26
3. Planning for success and for succession, including a workplace review							

Organisational redesign fit to deliver five-year plan, with the appropriate team structures and future proof skills. Team structures in place with manageable reporting lines and competent leaders	Low attrition and absence rates – work delivered on time with agreed quality	Employee survey results and positive feedback to ST	CEO / People Director / People Manager	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	This is now overlapping with thought on necessary restructure to meet new legislation, now that Defra White Paper is published and there are new structural changes in the pipeline.
Operational Plans prepared	Planning for success	Business as usual plus any planned projects carried out efficiently- less fire fighting	Dir Ops	Operations	2025 Q3	This document prepared and monitored regularly	Updated for Council January, June and September.
Working towards E&S accreditation for the RCVS and Hardwick St	Doing our bit to support sustainability; engaging staff team with this important work	Certification achieved; staff engagement	Facilities Manager	Operations	TBC	In discussion with Investors in Environment ref ongoing sustainability.	New policies under development - some will come to APC in October
4. Empowering our staff team confidently to deliver on the College's purpose, via competency frameworks and clarity of expectation							
Team members develop through CPD opportunities	Teams develop knowledge, confidence and capability	Completion of CPD; promotion / new roles	People Team	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Three learning workshops in progress to develop employee competencies. Newly appointed managers attend mandatory learning workshop and all employees complete learning through Litmos. Work has started to develop a managers guide for those 'moving and already moved into management'.
As part of the organisational review to change the way decisions are made at staff level, and by whom, and to promote the use of the values in everyday work	Prompt decision making, clarity of accountability and deadlines met	Feedback from Council and delivery of tasks/actions	People Director, supported by People manager with ST consulted	People	2026 Q4	Not started	New artwork with a focus on values being developed for Hardwick Street. Discussions took place with Officer team in July around balance of decision-making within the organisation and this conversation will be continued. Greater clarity may be required in the Delegation Scheme.
Review the RCVS Service Charter	Ensures it meets current expectations	Staff delivering services in line with the charter	Head of Customer Services	Operations	2026 Q4	To be started	Nothing to report
5. Creating a working culture with sound values and supportive management, and enabling and supporting our teams to live up to those values							

Implementing Employment Rights Bill and continuing to ensure the College is up to date with legislation which impacts employees and protects both the College and its workforce	All managers are competent in all new areas. New policies and procedures in place to align with legal changes	No legal challenges and limited employee relations issues	People Manager with People Director in support	People	2026 Q4	Ongoing	
All teams have an action plan from the Gallup survey and new performance documentation in place. Policies and procedures in good order with clarity for all about how and when to use. Fair and transparent opportunities for learning and progressing within the organisation should be clear	Improved Gallup feedback and positive conversations about the way employees work and feedback on policies and procedures	Low attrition and absence rates and evidence of positive conversations between manager and employee about performance. Minimal questions to People team.	People Director / People Manager with support from ST	People	2026 Q2	Ongoing	Positive response to 2026 survey completion. Teams are working through action plans, meeting planned with employees early September to review organisational areas for focus.
Addressing emerging themes such as the role of the middle manager, hybrid working, employee rights, the role of the employer, the use of technology and conflicting opinions	A satisfied workforce who can deliver on organisational objectives	Employee survey. Low ER cases	People Director and People team	People	2026 Q4	Not started	This work is linked to the organisational design work.
6. Providing a working environment that is inclusive, supportive and respectful, to develop everyone's unique strengths, and with zero tolerance for harassment and abuse							
All employees can use Hardwick Street and have clear information to navigate the building. Updated hybrid 'where we work' policy to be written	Good building use and feedback about positive interactions with colleagues whilst using the building	Building usage and improve Gallup scores especially around 'best friend' question (misunderstood)	People and Operations Director with support from CEO	People	2026 Q4	Ongoing	To coincide with 12 months in the new building an employee survey has been carried out. Feedback will be reviewed and actions developed. The 'how we work at Hardwick Street' document continues to be updated.
To provide an inclusive and accessible workspace	No staff or visitors feel excluded from accessing H Street	Very few complaints	Facilities Team	Operations	Ongoing		Consideration continues to be given to accessibility if any new work is planned. Any feedback from the survey in relation to accessibility will be actioned as appropriate.

Internal design and branding of Hardwick Street in line with our new visual identity	To illustrate our role, our impact in society and our heritage; to reflect and include those with and for whom we work; and, to make the office an engaging, inspiring and rewarding place to work	Completion of each floor, followed by feedback from visitors and staff team		Operations	2026 Q2	Ongoing and on track	Final phase of internal design to be completed shortly.
7. Horizon scanning, and bringing the outside in, via research, collaboration and experience							
Publication of education proposals, developments and impact data	Showcase the work carried out by the department	Relevant reports, academic papers	Dir of Ed	Education	2027 Q4	Early stages	
Monitoring for external risks that may have an impact on RCVS and considering how to mitigate them	Minimise surprises	Being prepared in the event of an external risk occurring	Governance Manager	Operations	Ongoing	Ongoing	Annual risk session took place with Council in June and Risk Registers being updated accordingly.
Ongoing research projects including longitudinal study	Gather data to inform policy making	Response rates to data, usable data	Head of PP&I & Research Manager	Executive	Ongoing	Ongoing	Detailed research plan now in place for 2026-2029 following planning meeting in January 2026
Review and enhance process for legal horizon scanning / cascading	Ensure no surprises ref new legal requirements	Process is implemented	Registrar/DoLS	Legal	2026 Q2	Starting	
8. Taking regular feedback across all our areas of work to ensure ongoing quality improvement							
Taking feedback across all areas of work	Improvement in processes and delivery of services	Regular review of feedback and action plan prepared	Head of Cust Services (& Research Manager)	Operations	2025 Q4	To be started	This has been delayed although some specific feedback is taken and reviewed eg at ProfCon Liaison Committee
Feedback protocol in place for all ST members along with standardised formats for colleagues giving feedback both internally and in recruitment activity New My Progress process rolled out to give quicker feedback	ST understand impact in teams and have plan to address development. Employees feel comfortable to provide feedback, unsuccessful candidates tell positive stories	Reduced developmental areas for ST Reduced internal conflict between employees Positive feedback through external sites such as Glassdoor	People Director and Talent Acquisition Manager	People	2026 Q4	Early stages	Paper going to Senior Team in September about feedback model. October Leaders Lounge feedback model will be rolled out, in preparation for My Progress in 2027. Managers will be expected to cascade the model/s to their team, People team to support where required.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	3 September 2026
Title	Review of the Code of Conduct for Council and Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members
Summary	Council is asked to approve the revised Code of Conduct and Policy for complaints that apply to Council.
Decisions required	To approve the revised Code of Conduct and Policy for complaints
Attachments	Annex A: Code of Conduct for Council members Annex B: Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members
Author	Clare Paget Director of Legal Services and Registrar C.Paget@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	**Classification**[1]	**Rationales**[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a

[1]Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Background

1. This paper seeks approval of the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct for Council members (**Annex A**) and the proposed amendments to the Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members (**Annex B**).

2. The Council Code of Conduct was last reviewed on 8 June 2023. The Policy for dealing with complaints was agreed by Council in September 2022 with a provision made for a review after two years. There had been no formal complaints against Council members from 2022 to 2024 and so, as there was no information to evaluate the operation of the Policy, Council agreed to review after a further two years.

3. The review of the Code and the Complaints process has incorporated consideration of the provisions that are currently contained in the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (The Bill) which is commonly referred to as the “Hillsborough Law”. The changes proposed in the Bill would strengthen the obligations of public authorities regarding transparency, honesty, accountability and candour. The Bill has not yet become law but is progressing through Parliament, currently at its second reading in the House of Lords. The provisions are intended to apply to organisations who carry out functions of a public nature generally and the individuals who hold office and work in those organisations.

4. The provisions of the Bill are closely aligned to the Nolan Principles, which are already set out in the Code of Conduct, and include accountability, openness and honesty. The Bill’s current provisions include a duty on public authorities and officials to act with candour, transparency and truthfulness and there are specific provisions regarding candour in investigations and inquests and the introduction of new criminal offences relating to the conduct of officials in public authorities.

5. Although the Bill is still working its way through Parliament, it is proposed that these changes should now be made to the Code of Conduct. The provisions of the Bill that have been added to the Code are compatible with the current obligations of Council members under the Code and are standards that Council members should comply with as responsible officials.

6. The amendments to the Code are unlikely to discharge, in full, the obligations that the RCVS will have when the Bill becomes law. The Bill contains many other provisions that will require some development of policies internally in due course. However, amending the Code at this stage is likely to demonstrate Council’s commitment to higher standards of accountability at the RCVS including at the top of the organisation. The Code is not only a functional document that sets out what Council members must do to comply, but it communicates the values and expectations of the RCVS around the conduct and behaviour of its most senior officers. It serves as a wider commitment to the public and the professions as to the conduct of the RCVS and sets the cultures of the organisation. It is likely to encourage a culture that learns from its mistakes and is open about them and prepare for the provisions of the Bill that may come into force in due course.

Code of Conduct for Council members (Annex A)

7. The revised Code of Conduct is included at Annex A.

8. There are some minor amendments that are designed to improve clarity and link the Code directly to Council members. There is more clarity around the function of Council and the considerations that Council members should have when making decisions, namely to further the objectives of the RCVS as set out in the Charter.

9. The Code already sets out that Council members should comply with the Nolan principles of public life and they are set out in paragraph 5. The text has been slightly amended to apply more clearly and directly to Council members.

10. Paragraphs 6 and 7 set out that Council members have a duty of candour, which is a provision in the Bill. Council members will have a duty to act with candour, openness and integrity at all times, providing accurate and complete information when it is relevant to a decision, investigation, review, audit or other forms of scrutiny. These provisions in the Bill build on the Nolan principles of transparency and honesty but apply more specific duties of transparency and candour as set out in the Bill.

11. Paragraph 6 (n) in the expectations section, sets out that Council members should raise concerns where they reasonably believe that a failure to comply with the Code has occurred. The protection of the organisation's or another's reputation must not take precedence over the public interest or those affected by the Council's decisions.

Further updates to the guidelines

12. There are some more significant changes to the guidelines for Council to be aware of in paragraphs (l) and (m):

- Confidentiality
- Compliance with the Duty of Candour

13. These provisions are not in conflict with each other. Council papers and discussions are confidential where they are marked as such and should not be disclosed to third parties unless that has been specifically authorised. This is set out in paragraph 13 of the Code. Confidentiality is important to ensure that policies are subject to rigorous and open discussion and debate by Council members and to ensure that third party organisations have the confidence to work with the RCVS in the development of policy. Appropriate confidentiality is essential in a well-governed organisation. However, Council members are also expected to act with transparency and candour and not to put the interests of the RCVS or any individual over the public interest. Paragraph 12 sets out that advice should be sought in respect of the disclosure of confidential information to a third party if the Council member is of the view that it should be disclosed to comply with any legal obligations including the duty of candour should it become a legal obligation.

Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members (Annex B)

14. The revised complaints policy is at Annex B. The amendments are primarily to clarify who makes decisions around complaints, and to clarify that prolonged absence can result in the complaints process being invoked. The current complaints process was introduced in 2022 and there are no significant concerns with the policy and how the process operates.

15. Any complaints process should be transparent and fair and ensure that the member complained about has a fair hearing, all members can be confident of a fair hearing if they find themselves in the same position and ensure that the public confidence in the RCVS as a regulator is maintained. Fair and open governance processes, particularly around complaints about members of Council, are key to maintaining public confidence and the confidence of the professions.

16. Council will note that Stage 2 of the process involves an independent Legal Assessor being appointed to devise a process for that stage. This is set out in the current process and is proposed to be retained in the revised process. Council members are a combination of elected and appointed members, and it is important to have independence in dealing with disciplinary matters to ensure that the process is fair and is seen to be fair, particularly amongst the electorate and the public. This also provides for a proportionate way of investigating complaints at Stage 2, allowing an independent lawyer to set out a fair and proportionate process taking into account the circumstances of the case.

17. This is also the reason for the provisions around transparency that are set out in paragraph x, to enable members to understand the reasons for any action taken as a result of a complaint and to maintain the confidence of members and the public that the RCVS governance processes are transparent and effective.

Conclusion

18. The Code of Conduct and the complaints policy set out the expectations on Council members, the process that applies if those standards are not met and also communicate the values and expectations that the RCVS has of the conduct of Council members to the professions and the public. Amending the Code and Policy in the way proposed will communicate to the public and the professions that the RCVS are committed to the Nolan principles including transparency and openness in order to maintain the confidence of the professions and the public in the RCVS.

19. In the event that the text or the obligations change at the point that the Bill becomes law, the Code may be further amended and brought to Council for approval. Amendments to other documents will be required, such as the delegation scheme, should Council approve the changes to these documents.

Decision

20. Council is asked to consider and approve the revised Code of Conduct for Council members and Policy for complaints against Council (or committee) members.

Annex A

Code of conduct for Council (and committee) members

Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

1. The RCVS has statutory and Royal Charter functions; and, through the RCVS Trust (also known as RCVS Knowledge), charitable functions. These are set out more fully in the Charter; the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966; and the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association. See: http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/royal-charter-and-legislation.

2. This Code of conduct applies to Council and committee members and any reference to Council member should be taken as reference to Council and committee.

3. The objectives that the Council, committees and staff of the RCVS must pursue when exercising its functions are to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.

Purpose of the Code

4. In order for the RCVS to command the confidence of all interested parties and the public, it is necessary for the Council members to observe appropriate standards of conduct. The purpose of this Code is to help to ensure that high standards are met and that those who act in the name of the RCVS are beyond reproach in the way they conduct themselves and the business of the RCVS. The required standards are set out in this Code that applies to all members of Council upon appointment. Its provisions also apply to those who sit on committees; sub-committees; working parties, etc.

Principles

5. In performing their duties, Council members should observe the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'):

   Selflessness: Council members should take decisions solely in the public interest, not for personal gain or benefit to family and friends;

   Integrity: Council members must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships that could be conflicts of interest;

   Objectivity: Council members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias;

   Accountability: Council members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this;

Openness: Council members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so;

Honesty: Council members should be truthful and promote honesty in public life;

Leadership: Council members should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Duty of Candour

6. Council members must cooperate proactively with honesty, transparency and frankness with inquiries and investigations. Council members must provide reasonable assistance to help an inquiry or investigation meet its objectives and must not cover up wrongdoing.

7. Council members must act in accordance with the duty of candour in all matters relating to their work with the RCVS. Council members must not deliberately or recklessly mislead the public.

General guidelines

8. Council members are expected to:

   a. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
   b. Prioritise attendance at Council meetings and attend all meetings as required, sending apologies in good time if attendance is impossible;
   c. Attend meetings well informed and fully prepared to contribute constructively to discussion and decisions;
   d. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
   e. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any individuals or group of individuals;
   f. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
   g. Live the College's values (compassion, collaboration, clarity and courage);
   h. Act at all times, including when conducting Council business, in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
   i. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
   j. Promote a collegial atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
   k. Respect and support the decisions made by Council and committees when communicating externally;
   l. Ensure that the confidentiality of Council business is respected and adhered to, and RCVS information governance policies are complied with;
   m. Comply with the duty of candour in relation to work at the RCVS;
   n. Raise concerns where there is reasonable belief of non-compliance with the Code;
   o. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders.

Specific guidelines

9. Council members are responsible for ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their role and the role of the RCVS as set out in the VSA 1966, and the Royal Charters. Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency, and all have a responsibility to ensure good governance of the College and manage its affairs with care diligence and skill. This includes overall fiscal and legal responsibility. Having been elected or appointed, they have a responsibility to attend meetings of the Council and any committees, sub-committees, working parties, etc., to which they have been appointed (unless they are unable, with good reason, to do so); and to be diligent in reading papers and giving appropriate consideration to issues to ensure that they are making decisions on a fully informed basis.

10. Council members should follow the principles of mutual respect in all their activities and be prepared to accept that others may have equally strong views in good faith that differ from their own. Council members must uphold high standards of courtesy and respect in all Council debates and meetings. Council members should treat colleagues with respect and not engage in any behaviour towards any colleague or member of staff that might reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying or harassment.

11. Council members must comply with their legal obligations in relation to their work at the RCVS.

Collective responsibility

12. Council members are collectively responsible for the decisions, even if they have voted against, abstained from voting, or were absent when the decision was made, and are expected to respect and support the collective decision, when communicating externally.

Confidentiality

13. Council members must not disclose information that has been shared with them that is designated by the RCVS as private or confidential. If members are in any way unsure if they can disclose information, then they should in the first instance seek advice from the President. If members disagree with a classification of private or confidential then members should raise with the relevant Committee Chair / President.

14. If Council members are of the view that confidential information should be disclosed to comply with the duty of candour then they should seek advice from the President and Registrar before any disclosure takes place.

Conflicts of interest

15. The '*Policy for managing conflicts of interest*' requires all Council members to file a Declaration of Interest; to keep it up to date; and to declare any additional interests as necessary at each meeting and generally to comply with the requirements of the policy.

Communication

16. Council members have a role in communicating with the public and the profession about what the RCVS does but should take care to ensure that what they say is accurate and consistent with established policies and procedures – if in doubt, they should consult the Communications

Department. Any communication with the media on behalf of the RCVS must be discussed with the Communications Department in advance.

17. Council members have a responsibility to distinguish clearly when speaking or writing in any public forum, between the views of the RCVS and their personal views, or of any other organisation they may be affiliated with.

Enforcement

18. Complaints that an RCVS Council member has breached this Code of Conduct should be made at the earliest opportunity to the RCVS President or Senior Vice President, and Registrar, in accordance with the '*Policy for Dealing with Complaints about Council Members'*.

Annex B

Policy for dealing with complaints about Council (and committee) members

Purpose

1. This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed in dealing with a complaint about a Council member, where it is alleged or appears that the conduct of the Council member has fallen below the standards expected.

Scope

2. The standards expected of Council members are as set out in the Code of Conduct for Council Members. Any alleged breach of the Code or other conduct unbefitting of a Council member should be considered in accordance with this Policy.

3. Poor performance on the part of a Council member would normally fall outwith the scope of this policy and be dealt with by means of advice issued to the Council member by the President / Registrar. However, consistent poor performance that goes unremedied, prolonged unjustified absence or exceptionally poor performance, may be matters when a Council member could be declared unfit to be a member of Council and, therefore, becomes an appropriate matter to be dealt with under this policy.

4. Complaints about a Council member should be raised in writing with the President and Registrar. In the event that the complaint relates to the President then it should be raised with the Senior Vice President and the Registrar.

5. In the event that the complaint relates to actions of Council as a whole, these should be raised with the Privy Council: https://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/work-of-the-privy-council-office/complaints.

6. The President or Senior Vice President as the case may be, will seek the advice of the Registrar in dealing with the complaint.

Who can bring a complaint?

7. Complaints may be brought by anyone including Council members, MRCVS', RVNs, third parties and employees of the RCVS and should be raised as soon as practicable, and in any event no later than [6] calendar months after the date of the alleged misconduct (or the date on which the complainant became aware of it). The President (or as the case may be Senior Vice President) may dispense with the time limit, if they consider that there were exceptional circumstances and that it is reasonable to do so.

Procedure re: Complaint

8. Upon receipt of a complaint the President (or as the case may be Senior Vice-President) may:

a. Conclude that the complaint does not fall within the scope of this policy, and will notify both the Complainant and Council member accordingly; or
b. Direct that the matter should be referred to Stage 1.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

9. The complaint will be investigated by the President (or Senior Vice-President). The President (or Senior Vice-President) will notify the Council member complained about and invite them to comment on the complaint and make representations. The President (or Senior Vice-President) may also seek such other information as they consider necessary to carry out an investigation. If the President (or Senior Vice-President) considers that the complaint is capable of Informal Resolution, they will notify the parties of the results of the investigation and the proposed resolution. Resolution could involve mediation between the parties, or a written warning or such other resolution as is considered appropriate including to dismiss the complaint or to uphold the complaint but with no further action taken.

10. If the President (or Senior Vice-President) considers that the complaint is not capable of informal resolution or if it is considered that, if upheld, it is such that it could lead to the suspension or removal of the Council member, they will write to all parties to advise that the matter will be referred to Stage 2 for Formal Resolution by a Panel (see below).

11. A referral to Stage 2 may also be made if the Complainant is unhappy with the outcome proposed resolution at Stage 1. The President (or Senior Vice-President) will write to the parties giving reasons for their decision to refer or not to Stage 2.

12. The President (or Senior Vice-President) may delegate responsibility for contacting parties and other administrative functions to an appropriate member of RCVS staff.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

13. Where Formal Resolution is directed, the President (or Senior Vice-President) will direct this to be carried out by one of the Legal Assessors appointed to the RCVS under paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966, who shall according to the nature and extent of the complaint decide the appropriate procedures to be followed to determine the complaint; to include, for example, written submissions / formal hearings. The procedures to be followed shall be at the discretion of the Legal Assessor but would ordinarily include the establishment of a Panel of three persons (the Conduct Committee), to include: the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, a lay person who is not a member of Council, and a professional person who is not a member of Council; to consider the complaint. The Legal Assessor may delegate responsibility for contacting participants and other administrative functions to an appropriate member of RCVS staff.

14. Upon conclusion of the investigation the Legal Assessor will submit a written report and recommendations to the President / Registrar to include one of the following:

a. To dismiss the complaint;
b. To uphold the complaint, but with no further action;
c. That the Council member should be issued with a written warning;

d. That the Council member should be suspended for a period of up to 12 months, or removed from Council;
e. That the police or a regulatory, law enforcement or prosecuting body be informed of the matter.

15. The President will arrange for the Report and recommendation of the Legal Assessor / Conduct Committee to be considered by RCVS Council, in private session which will decide on the appropriate action to be taken.

16. Any decision by Council as set out in paragraph 14 above should be reported in open session of Council together with sufficient information to allow the public and members of the profession to understand the reasons for the decision. Where the complaint involves or refers to private matters, such as the health of any person the President may at their discretion direct that the private details are not reported publicly. Similarly, the President may at their discretion determine that no information should be disclosed publicly until the conclusion of any action by the police / other enforcement or regulatory body.

17. Where Council upholds a complaint about a member (irrespective of the sanction imposed), then if such a member has concerns about the process by which the investigation was handled and within 21 days makes a request in writing for an independent review, setting out in full the reasons for their concerns, the Registrar will appoint an independent barrister or solicitor of at least 10 years' standing to review the way in which the investigation was dealt with and provide a written report. If the report supports the concerns raised by the member, Council will be asked to reconsider its decision.

18. Where a complaint has been received and before a decision is reached on that complaint (whether at Stage 1 or Stage 2) the member resigns from Council, in the event that the member complained about is re-elected / re-appointed to Council within 2 years of the date of resignation the complaint will be re-activated and considered as set out above.

19. This Policy may be implemented, if considered appropriate to do so by the President, in relation to a complaint against a member of one of the College's Committees (other than Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC), Disciplinary Committee (DC), Registered Veterinary Nurse Preliminary Investigation Committee (RVN PIC), or Registered Veterinary Nurse Disciplinary Committee (RVN DC)) who is not also a Council Member.

Summary	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	3 September 2026
Title	Draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework
Summary	A draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework is presented for Council's consideration. The framework is intended to provide a formal foundation for the subsequent development of an internal audit strategy/plan for 2027.
Decisions required	Council is asked to ratify the draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework in principle, noting the Audit and Risk Committee's previous support for the framework and that it may agree further amendments at its meeting on 2 September 2026, before the final version is adopted.
Attachments	Annex A: Draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework (v2)
Author	Huda Haid Governance Officer h.haid@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

[1]Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked ‘Draft’.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation, or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.
[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others. 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation. 3. To protect commercially sensitive information. 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS.
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation.

Draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework

1. For internal audit at the RCVS, in the past the College has obtained assurance through deep dives into higher-risk areas, using external advisors where specialist assurance was required or, where appropriate, by extending the scope of the external audit.

2. As part of its work remit, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is responsible for oversight of the internal audit function to provide assurance over governance, risk management, and internal control across the organisation. The Committee previously recognised the need to strengthen the College's internal audit arrangements and agreed that there would be value in moving to a more formalised and structured internal audit approach. To support this, an initial Internal Audit Strategy Framework (IASF) had been drafted to provide a high-level basis for a formal, risk-based and strategically aligned approach. The IASF is intended to support a consistent, repeatable and forward-looking internal audit programme, and will act as the structure from which an audit strategy/plan will be developed for 2027.

3. The ARC considered a first draft of the IASF at its meeting on 12 May 2026 and supported the general direction of travel subject to a few recommended amendments. The Committee also considered what delivery model (whether in-house, co-sourced or fully outsourced) would be appropriate and the members agreed that it should be fully outsourced to an external delivery partner.

4. A revised final version of the IASF, which took the Committee's feedback and decisions into account, as well as incorporating other minor changes to improve structural flow and overall clarity, was presented to the ARC on 2 September 2026 for review and approval.

5. The IASF also requires ratification by RCVS Council. As the ARC previously supported the IASF, and as the September Council meeting takes place immediately after the Committee's (on 3 September 2026), the same draft (at **Annex A**) has been submitted to Council for ratification in principle, on the understanding that the ARC may agree further amendments at its meeting on 2 September, before the document is finalised. This recommendation reflects the ARC's previous support for the earlier version of the IASF in May.

6. Any amendments agreed by the ARC will be incorporated into the final version. Following finalisation, the Committee will review the IASF annually ahead of each audit engagement, and any future revisions will be submitted to Council for ratification on the Committee's recommendation.

Annex A: Draft Internal Audit Strategy Framework

Document control	
Version	1.0
Owner	Audit and Risk Committee
Approval body	RCVS Council
Approval date	3 September 2026
Review frequency	Annual
Next review date	September 2027

Executive summary

This Internal Audit Strategy Framework sets out the intended purpose, principles, governance, and approach for internal audit at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

The framework for the internal audit work will follow a structured, risk-based methodology that will involve identifying high risk areas rather than focusing on compliance reporting alone. It proposes a timeframe aligning with the Strategic Plan (2026–2029), with audit coverage informed by the Corporate Risk Register, Assurance Map, Risk Management Policy, and organisational priorities.

1. Purpose of the framework

1.1. The purpose of this framework is to:

a) define the role and objectives of internal audit within the RCVS,
b) establish the principles that will govern internal audit activity,
c) set out the responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee, RCVS Council and the College Senior Team, and
d) describe how audit work will be planned, prioritised, and reported.

2. Role and objectives of internal audit

2.1. Internal audit exists to provide independent and objective assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee and RCVS Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control across the RCVS.

2.2. Internal audit findings may also support improvement by highlighting weaknesses, gaps or risks to inform management's response actions.

2.3. The objectives of internal audit are to:

a) provide assurance over the management of the major risks facing RCVS,
b) assess whether key controls are appropriately designed and operating effectively,
c) provide meaningful analysis for the Audit and Risk Committee through focused, risk-based reporting,
d) identify themes, emerging issues, and areas for improvement across the control environment, and
e) support a coordinated view of assurance through assurance mapping.

3. Guiding principles

3.1. Internal audit activity should be guided by the following principles:

a) Independence and objectivity
b) Risk-based planning and prioritisation
c) Proportionality, with a focus on matters of greatest significance
d) Clarity, evidence, and practical insight
e) Alignment with organisational strategy and risk appetite
f) Transparency in reporting and follow-up
g) Continuous review and improvement

4. Summary of roles and responsibilities

Audit and Risk Committee

4.1. The Audit and Risk Committee will approve and recommend ratification of the framework to RCVS Council. It is responsible for oversight of the internal audit framework, scrutiny of audit outputs and monitoring whether assurance remains sufficient and appropriately focused.

RCVS Council

4.2. RCVS Council will ratify the framework following recommendation from the Audit and Risk Committee. It is responsible for overall governance and should receive assurance that the internal audit approach is proportionate, effective, and aligned to organisational priorities.

Senior Team

4.3. The Senior Team are responsible for supporting risk-based planning and audit activity, responding to findings, and implementing responsive actions.

5. Governance and oversight

5.1. The Audit and Risk Committee will oversee the implementation of this framework. The Committee should:

a) regularly review and challenge the proposed internal audit strategy and plan,

b) assess whether planned audit coverage is aligned to principal organisational risks,
c) scrutinise deep-dive internal audit reports and thematic findings,
d) monitor the implementation of agreed management actions arising from internal audit work, and
e) consider the overall adequacy of assurance available to it and RCVS Council.

5.2. RCVS Council will receive appropriate assurance through reporting from the Audit and Risk Committee on the effectiveness of the internal audit approach and the key findings arising from the audit work.

5.3. Management should support the process by identifying relevant strategic and operational developments, maintaining the Corporate Risk Register, providing access to information, and implementing agreed actions within appropriate timescales.

6. Scope of internal audit

6.1. The scope of internal audit should be sufficiently broad to provide assurance over governance, risk management, and internal control across the organisation. The detailed scope of the audit work should be determined through the planning process and may include reviews of:

a) top strategic and corporate risks,
b) governance and decision-making processes,
c) financial control and stewardship,
d) regulatory, legal and policy compliance,
e) operational resilience and business continuity,
f) information governance, cyber security, and data protection,
g) programme and project governance, and
h) culture, accountability, and delegated authority.

7. Risk-based audit planning methodology

7.1. Internal audit planning should follow a risk-based methodology. The plan should be developed using a combination of:

a) the Corporate Risk Register,
b) the Assurance Map,
c) the Risk Management Policy and broader risk framework, including the Risk Appetite Statement,
d) strategic priorities and major organisational developments or transformation programmes,
e) management and Senior Team insight on current and emerging risks,
f) changes in strategy, operating model, systems, or regulation,
g) previous audit findings and known control weaknesses,
h) areas or major spend and investment, and
i) areas of limited or uncertain assurance.

7.2. In applying this methodology, internal audit should:

a) prioritise areas of greatest inherent risk and organisational importance,

b) take account of the pace of change, complexity, and control maturity,
c) consider both discrete risk areas and cross-cutting themes,
d) provide a rational basis for coverage over the period 2026–2029, and
e) be flexible to respond to emerging issues during the planning period.

7.3. A more detailed audit plan should sit beneath this framework and be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for review and approval at appropriate intervals. The plan should set out intended coverage over a defined period.

8. Delivery model

8.1. The delivery model for internal audit will be fully outsourced.

8.2. The RCVS should ensure that internal audit has:
a) sufficient independence from operational management,
b) access to appropriate skills and expertise,
c) sufficient capacity to deliver the agreed plan,
d) authority to access records, systems, and personnel as needed, and
e) appropriate arrangements for quality assurance and escalation where required.

9. Reporting approach

9.1. Internal audit reporting should be designed to support deep-dive risk analysis by the Audit and Risk Committee.

9.2. Reports should be clear, evidence-based, and focused on implications for governance, risk, and internal control. They should normally include:
a) the scope and objective of the review,
b) key findings and their significance,
c) root causes and control implications,
d) an assessment of risk exposure or control weakness,
e) practical recommendations and agreed management actions, and
f) timescales and accountable owners.

9.3. The Audit and Risk Committee must report to RCVS Council on:
a) progress against the audit plan,
b) any proposed changes to planned coverage,
c) overdue actions and implementation status,
d) recurring themes and systemic issues, and
e) an overall view of assurance emerging from completed work.

10. Planning cycle and review

10.1. This framework is intended to apply for the period of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029. The framework should, however, be reviewed annually during that period to ensure it remains relevant, particularly where there are significant changes in:

a) organisational strategy or priorities,
b) the Corporate Risk Register or overall risk profile,
c) governance arrangements,
d) major programmes, transformation activity or system change,
e) regulatory role/expectations, and
f) internal audit standards or professional requirements.

10.2. A detailed annual or rolling plan should sit beneath this framework and translate the strategy into specific audit engagements.

11. Measures of effectiveness

11.1. The effectiveness of the internal audit strategy may be assessed through measures such as:

a) alignment of audit coverage to priority risks,
b) quality and usefulness of reports to the Audit and Risk Committee,
c) completion of the agreed audit plan,
d) timeliness of reporting,
e) implementation rate of agreed actions, and
f) evidence that audit work informs governance and risk decisions.

Version history

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	September 2026	First issue.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	3 September 2026
Title	Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report describes the work of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since RCVS Council's last meeting, including by reference to key stage indicators, and provides information about the nature of concerns being considered by the RCVS.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	Chris Murdoch Senior Case Manager **c.murdoch@rcvs.org.uk** Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct **g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk**

Classifications		
Document	**Classification**[1]	**Rationales**[2]
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

[1]Classifications explained	
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Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council September 2026

Introduction

1. This report provides information about the activities of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) since the last report and covers the period 23 May 2026 to 23 August 2026.

2. Since the last Report to Council there have been six Stage two Preliminary Investigation Committee (S2PIC) meetings (3 and 16 June, 8 and 22 July, 5 and 19 August and an extraordinary meeting which took place on 13 August). The extraordinary meeting was set up to consider a case that had an excessively large volume of evidence to consider, meaning it would have been impractical to add it to a normal agenda.

New cases considered by the S2PIC

3. The total number of new cases considered by the S2PIC at the seven meetings referred to above is 15. Of the 15 new cases considered:

   - Six were concluded at first consideration by the Committee;
   - Nine were referred for further investigation, that is, further enquiries, visits and/or preliminary expert reports;
   - No new cases were referred to the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

4. No cases have been referred to the RCVS Performance or Health Protocols in the reporting period.

Ongoing Investigations

5. The S2PIC is currently investigating 50 ongoing cases where the Committee has requested statements, visits or preliminary expert reports (for example).

Health Protocol

6. There are no veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Protocol

7. There is one veterinary surgeon currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Professional Conduct Department - Enquiries and concerns

8. Before registering a concern with the RCVS, potential complainants must make an Enquiry (either in writing or by telephone), so that Case Managers can consider with the enquirer whether they should raise a formal concern or whether the matter would be more appropriately dealt with through the Veterinary Client Mediation Service (VCMS).

9. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026:

- the number of matters registered as Enquiries was 965; and,
- the number of formal Concerns registered in the same period was 211.

10. In order to demonstrate the trend in case numbers, the number of concerns registered per calendar year for the last six years is below:

    - 12 months to end of December 2025 759
    - 12 months to end of December 2024 667
    - 12 months to end of December 2023 614
    - 12 months to end of December 2022 544
    - 12 months to end of December 2021 683
    - 12 months to end of December 2020 509

11. The table below shows the categories of matters registered as Concerns between 23 May and 23 August 2026. Council is asked to note that during the reporting period the RCVS has introduced a new CRM system. As some data is still being migrated at the time of writing, the information below may be incomplete or contain some omissions or inaccuracies.

Concerns registered between 23 May and 23 August 2026

Description of Category	Number of Cases
- Advertising and publicity	0
- Certification	3
- Client confidentiality	0
- Clinical and client records	9
- Clinical governance	0
- Communication and consent	14
- Communication between professional colleagues	0
- Consumer rights and freedom of choice	1
- Conviction	2
- CPD compliance	0
- Delegation to veterinary nurses	0
- Equine pre-purchase examinations	3
- Euthanasia of animals	7
- Euthanasia of animals – 'Tuk's law'	0
- Fair trading requirements	0
- Giving evidence for court	2
- Health case *(potential)*	0
- Microchipping	0
- Miscellaneous	1
- Named veterinary surgeons	0
- Practice information, fees & animal insurance	5
- Performance case *(potential)*	0

- Raising concerns about a colleague	6
- Recognised veterinary practice	0
- Referrals and second opinions	0
- Registration investigation	0
- Restoration application	0
- Social media and networking forums	0
- Treatment of animals by unqualified persons	0
- Use of samples, images, post-mortems and disposal	0
- Veterinary care - general	116
- Veterinary care – surgical errors/complications	1
- Veterinary care – unnecessary treatment/diagnostic work	0
- Veterinary care – unfit discharge/post-op complications	5
- Veterinary care – missed or misdiagnosis	6
- Veterinary medicines	5
- Veterinary medicines – application of factors without physical examination	0
- Veterinary medicines – prescribing CDs/antimicrobials without physical examination	1
- Veterinary medicines – 'under care' query, other	0
- Veterinary teams and leaders	0
- 24-hour emergency first aid and pain relief	5
- Unassigned	19
Total	**211**

Data source – Microsoft Dynamics 365 CRM computer system professional conduct concerns data.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

12. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, the Committee has referred two cases involving two veterinary surgeons to the DC.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

13. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee (CCC).

Veterinary Investigators

14. The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators have not undertaken any visits since the last report.

Concerns procedure

15. The median number of weeks in which cases concluded at Stage one can be seen below.

Month in which case concluded	Median number of weeks taken
January 2024	16
February 2024	15

March 2024	17.6
April 2024	15
May 2024	12.9
June 2024	19.9
July 2024	11.9
August 2024	15.2
September 2024	13.9
October 2024	12
November 2024	14.4
December 2024	15.9
January 2025	17.4
February 2025	13.4
March 2025	14.3
April 2025	10.1
May 2025	14.7
June 2025	15
July 2025	18.9
August 2025	17.1
September 2025	18
October 2025	14
November 2025	16.2
December 2025	19.1
January 2026	19.1
February 2026	13.9
March 2026	17.7
April 2026	14.9
May 2026	15.6
June 2026	16.9
July 2026	17.9

16. The KPI for cases at Stage one is six months. As well as reporting those that meet/don't meet that KPI, we provide median times taken, as this is a good indicator of the most likely duration of matters for those involved in the process.

17. The percentage of cases that met the six-month KPI is below.

Month case started	Cases that met KPI
January 2024	86%
February 2024	93%
March 2024	87%
April 2024	90%
May 2024	85%
June 2024	75%
July 2024	97%
August 2024	91%
September 2024	91%
October 2024	91%
November 2024	94%

December 2024	86%
January 2025	94%
February 2025	79%
March 2025	90%
April 2025	85%
May 2025	89%
June 2025	84%
July 2025	88%
August 2025	84%
September 2025	88%
October 2025	82%
November 2025	87%
December 2025	89%
January 2026	86%

18. The Stage 2 KPI is currently for the PIC to reach a decision on simple cases before it within seven months. A case is deemed to be complex where the PIC requests that witness statements and/or expert evidence be obtained. There is no set KPI for complex cases, in view of the specific complexities of each case. Cases are reported in detail to the Professional Conduct Liaison Committee, which is able to discuss and monitor performance accordingly.

19. In the period 23 May to 23 August 2026, the S2PIC reached a decision (to close, refer to the CCC, or refer to DC) within the relevant KPI in four out of nine simple cases.

20. Three complex cases were decided. In accordance with the above, these cases (and the work of the department in general) are reported and discussed in detail at the Professional Conduct Liaison Committee meeting.

Illegal practice

21. Since the last Report to Council (which gave information to 22 May 2026), 15 new reports of suspected illegal practice have been received. Of these, three have been closed after assessment, two have been sent “cease and desist” letters and three have been sent advisory letters. There is a total of nine ongoing enquiries.

Summary	
Meeting	Council
Date	3 September 2026
Title	RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee Report to Council
Summary	This report sets out the work of the Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Authors	Sandra Neary Secretary to the RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee s.neary@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0730 Gemma Crossley Head of Professional Conduct g.crossley@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0740

Classifications		
Document	**Classification[1]**	**Rationales[2]**
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

[1]Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Registered Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee

Report to Council

Introduction

1. Since the last Report to Council, there have been two meetings of the Stage 2 VN PIC which took place on 4 June and 21 July. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 25 August 2026.

RVN Concerns received / registered

2. In the period 23 May and 21 August 2026, there were 24 new Concerns registered relating to RVNs. Of these 24 new Concerns:

    - 2 cases closed at Stage 1 VNPIC
    - 20 cases are currently under investigation by a Case Manager, Veterinary Nurse, Veterinary surgeon, and a lay member (Stage 1 VNPIC)
    - 2 cases have been adjourned for consideration by the Stage 2 VNPIC

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

3. Two new cases have been considered by the Stage 2 VNPIC between 23 May and 21 August 2026.

Ongoing Investigations

4. Seven concerns are currently under investigation by the Stage 2 VN PIC, and these will be returned to the Committee for a decision in due course.

Health Concerns

5. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Health Protocol.

Performance Concerns

6. There are currently no RVNs being managed in the context of the RCVS Performance Protocol.

Referral to Disciplinary Committee

7. Since the last report, one case has been referred to the RVN Disciplinary Committee.

Referral to Charter Case Committee

8. Since the last report, no cases have been referred to the Charter Case Committee.

Disciplinary Hearings

9. Since the last report, one disciplinary hearing took place on 3 and 4 June 2026 which related to 15 charges against the RVN, all of which concerned previous criminal convictions dating between 2008 and 2020. The convictions comprised theft and public order offences, all of which were spent and none of which resulted in an immediate custodial sentence.

10. While the Committee recognised that the offending had taken place before the RVN joined the Register of Veterinary Nurses, it found that the crimes she had committed constituted serious professional misconduct and undermined public confidence in the profession.

11. In considering the most appropriate sanction for the RVN, the Committee took into account a number of additional mitigating factors, including: the fact she demonstrated insight and remorse into her offending; the difficult personal circumstances at the time of offending; efforts to avoid repeating the offending; her frank personal statement to the RCVS prior to registration; significant lapse of time since the last offence; and positive character testimonials.

12. In all the circumstances, the Committee was not satisfied that the public interest required a sanction to protect it. The Committee decided that the demands of the public interest were adequately marked and served by the findings already made that the convictions rendered the respondent unfit to practise and that she had been guilty of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect. As a result, the Committee decided that it would be appropriate and proportionate to impose no further action in this case.