

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH 2009

ACTION

- 1) Council bowed heads in remembrance of Sandy Clark (North of Scotland).

The Chairman, Nicky Paull (President) welcomed Council and Board members to the meeting. The President of the RCVS attended the meeting as an observer during the afternoon only.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2) Apologies were received from:
Tim Greet (Past President)
Richard Dixon (BSAVA)
Alison Gibbs (Ayrshire)
Karen Reed (Overseas Group Chairman)
Sam Mansley (SVS) replaced by Dick Thompson
Tom Ogilvie-Graham (RAVC), replaced by Mary Roohan
Richard Harvey (Chairman of VPG) pm only
Chris House (BEVA) pm only

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 3) The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a correct record and were proposed by Simon Doherty, seconded by Freda Scott-Park and approved by Council.

UPDATE PAPER

- 4) The President introduced the update paper which was prepared as an alternative to verbal updates on: Responsibility and Cost Sharing, "PETS or pests", Bluetongue vaccinations, dog breeding, welfare at slaughter, BVA divisional insurance policies and recent consultations.

- 5) Welfare at Slaughter

Council were given an update on the progression of the regulation through the European legislation process. The amendments to the regulation, which included many proposed by FVE, were discussed at the EU AGRI Committee on 16th March. Amendments calling for the labelling of products of religious slaughter and compulsory stunning before slaughter were rejected.

- 6) The President reported that she had spoken to the CVO about the rejection of the amendment. It had been suggested that the BVA write to the Secretary of State enquiring whether the UK could legislate in its own right on this issue.

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- 7) Consultations

The President encouraged members and their divisions to respond to consultations. Views were needed to ensure that BVA submissions included robust informed arguments.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

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- 8) The Past President read the list of deceased members whilst Council stood in silence.
- 9) Peter Jackson spoke to the memory of Peter Wilson and Lee Hibbert; Bob Michell and Peter Robinson spoke to the memory of John Sandford; Mervyn Harris spoke to the memory of John David; Sam Duff and David Catlow spoke to the memory of Sandy Clark; Paul Roger spoke to the memory of Terry Boundy; Christine Shield spoke to the memory of Anthea Smith; Andrew Parker spoke to the memory of Leslie Vaughn.
- 10) The President reported that the total BVA membership as of March 2009 was 11,793, which compared to 11,455 in March 2008.
- 11) The new BVA members were proposed by Carl Padgett (BVA AWF), seconded by Richard Harvey (VPG) and approved by Council.

VETERINARY POLICY GROUP (VPG)

- 12) The President invited the Chairman of the VPG, Dr Richard Harvey, to present the minutes to Council.
- 13) Responsibility and Cost Sharing
Council was informed that Defra was expecting to publish the consultation in late March. VPG had discussed the invitation from Defra for BVA to participate in the launch and in regional events to support the consultation. The group had agreed that BVA should take part provided BVA was unhampered in giving its views on responsibility and cost sharing. Council would be informed of the consultation launch and were invited to submit their views to the BVA via John Maslin (johnm@bva.co.uk).
- 14) Medicines Group
The VPG Chairman reported to Council the outcome of the recent Medicines Group meeting. The group:
 - a) Agreed to develop focused guidance in poster format on the judicious use of antimicrobials to minimise resistance development.
 - b) Were in the process of producing a clear BVA position statement on Anthelmintic resistance.
 - c) Had discussed members concerns over several issues such as the 28 day rule for disposing of opened but unused packs of some medicines; the sale of NFA-VPS products in supermarkets.
 - d) The President had also written to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's regarding their classification review of sheep vaccines. A letter had also been published in the Veterinary Record.
- 15) EU Animal Health Action Plan
VPG had received a presentation from Defra on the EU Animal Health Strategy Action Plan. VPG had decided that the BVA should focus on key areas only. A finalised document, detailing BVA's areas of interest within the plan, from VPG would be presented to the FVE to contribute to a cross Europe veterinary view for lobbying on how the EU strategy would be taken forward.
- 16) Bovine TB

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It was reported that the VPG were currently reviewing the BVA's policy documents on bTB and would be taking the issue forward at their next meeting.

17) Vets and Vet Services

Council were informed that the publication of the Lowe Report on Vets and Vet Services had been delayed. Council would be informed as soon as the report was published.

18) Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) Annual Report

It was reported that the BVA had sent a letter to the VMD regarding the CMO's call for a ban on the use of certain antibiotics (quinolones and cephalosporins). The BVA believed that the CMO's recommendation was disproportionate to the precautionary principle and ignored the science based risk assessment that was being taken by other global authorities.

COUNCIL REVIEW GROUP (CRG)

19) The Chairman of the CRG updated Council on the recommendations from the group to date. Council was reminded that the aim of the CRG was "to ensure that the representational function of BVA as delivered through Council is fit for purpose to deliver the needs of the profession from grass roots, both now and in the future."

20) Members congratulated the CRG on their courage and vision and there was a feeling that the review was an essential move forward in order to regenerate the function of Council. It was also reconfirmed that the review was not a cost cutting exercise but a way to make sure that Council was functioning optimally for all BVA members.

21) Regional Representation

The proposals for regional representation were described. There was some support of the recommendation to have eight English regions, which would reflect the regional government boundaries. It was also suggested that there should be 2 Scottish, 2 Welsh and 1 Northern Irish representatives.

22) There was concern from some territorial divisions that the areas proposed were too large and that representatives would find it difficult to collect responses from their regions. In addition some members felt that the MSG model for consultation, which was similar to the proposed model for Council, was not currently working. Some territorial members felt that regional representatives should be active members of the divisions.

23) It was explained that the fine details were yet to be agreed but that BVA HQ would be supporting the regional representatives and that the regional system proposed would allow all BVA members to be represented on Council, whether or not they were members of a division, which is currently not the case.

24) BVAHQ hold email addresses for the majority of members which would allow the regional representative to electronically contact members. Some members felt that there was no need for face to face meetings in this electronic era where as others preferred to meet within their own divisions.

25) It was hoped that if the regional system was introduced, divisions would

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continue to discuss council papers and feed views through the regional representatives who may or may not be a member of the division.

26) Specialist Division Representation

The proposal to reduce the number of specialist divisions on council from 21 to 14 was discussed. It was explained that the smaller divisions would be represented on the various standing committees and that they would be invited to Council on an *ad hoc* basis when necessary. Council generally supported the proposals.

- 27) LAVA and SGV were supportive of the proposed arrangements provided that there were adequate methods for the divisions not represented on Council to feed views into the BVA. AVI, however, were not supportive of the proposals with regard to specialist representation and did not believe that representation through MSG and the Medicines Group was adequate. The smaller divisions were assured that they would be welcomed to attend Council meeting when there were items on the agenda that they felt were directly relevant to their organisation.

28) Term of Office

Council were informed of the proposal to limit the term of office for all Council members (both regional and specialist) to two terms of three years. Some members were concerned with this proposal and felt that there should be no limit. Others agreed that limits on terms of office would encourage new blood into council and avoid the blocking of positions on Council. It was agreed that the rotation of members should be staggered in order to avoid the creation of a brand new council every 3 or 6 years, however, they were assured that the proposals included a clause which allowed a representative to be re-elected to Council following a 2 year gap.

29) Election Process

It was stated that the specialist divisions would have their own procedures for council member selection but the introduction of a new regional structure would require a formal process for the election of representatives as follows:

- a) Calls for nominations would go out to regions by email to each member in the region with an invitation to put themselves forward. Their application would need to be supported by a proposer and include a manifesto which would be posted on the regional area of the website;
 - b) Candidates would be permitted to canvass for votes.
 - c) Each member in the region would be invited to vote for their preferred representative
 - d) Voting would be online with reminders given to ensure maximum involvement;
 - e) Votes cast would be cross referenced to the BVA database.
- 30) There was some concern that there would be a lack of candidates putting their names forward for election. It was however noted that there has always been a large numbers of applicants for vacant positions on the BVA standing committees.
- 31) Officers and Past Presidents
- The CRG recommended to Council that the number of Officers on council should remain at three. There should also be three past presidents, which would bring the term for an officer in line with that of the term of a member,

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6 years. Chairmen of the 5 standing committees would also sit as full members on Council. Council were supportive of these proposals.

32) Council Member Job Description

Council were supportive of the proposed Council member job description in principle. It was also explained that a members' handbook would be produced once the structure of the new council had been decided and this proposal was also supported.

33) Issues for consideration by CRG

Council suggested or asked for clarification on the following points:

- a) That CRG needed to demonstrate how Council was currently not working.
- b) That there should be a BVA representative from the FVE. It was recognised that policy decisions were increasingly being made on a European rather than a national level.
- c) There should be consideration for the inclusion of a London representative.
- d) The importance of voting within Council should be stressed in order to strengthen the Officer's mandate.
- e) Was the role of the specialist Council member as a delegate or a representative in terms of voting rights?
- f) Should divisions pay their own expenses?
- g) Should Council papers be sent out earlier with an update paper before the meeting? Should they be sent out in electronic form only?
- h) Why not make the size of Council smaller, for example the number of Past Presidents could be reduced.

34) Way Forward

Council was informed that the CRG would meet again to consider Council's views. A further set of recommendations would be presented to the May meeting of the Board and the outcome would be reported at the July meeting of Council. Any new Council structure would require changes to be made to the Articles of Association and formal approval at an AGM.

ADDRESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

35) Finances

The Chairman reported that the final results for the year 2008, subject to audit, showed an operating deficit of some £47k and a net cash deficit of £88k that therefore reduced the year end reserves to £633k.

- 36)** Council was informed that income for 2009 would be affected by the continued decline in advertising revenue for the Association's publications in addition there would be a significant costs associated with the transfer of publications to BMJ.

- 37)** The board had constituted an Income Generation Subgroup in order to examine opportunities for developing additional streams of income to the BVA. Council would be updated on the group's deliberations in July.

38) Publications

The Chairman reminded Council that at the last meeting in December there had been an update on the possible outsourcing of BVA publications.

- 39)** Council was informed that negotiations were now completed and that the

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contract with the British Medical Journal Publishing Group Limited (BMJ) had been signed. As of May 1st 2009 the responsibility for the production and publication of the 'Veterinary Record' and 'In Practice' would be transferred to the BMJ.

- 40) The responsibility for advertising sales in the two publications would also be transferred to BMJ on July 1st 2009.

WORLD AND EUROPEAN VETERINARY POLICY

41) FVE

The Past President, and Chairman of the UK Coordination group, informed Council about the role of BVA within the FVE, and what the value is to BVA. The FVE was founded in 1975 and currently represented 41 national veterinary organisations across 36 European countries. Each participating nation sends a delegation, twice a year, to the General Assembly.

- 42) The UK coordination group is the body tasked with representing the BVA's interests in the FVE. This group is made up of representatives from the BVA, RCVS, BSAVA, SPVS, VPHA, and AGV as well as any UK FVE committee or board members.

- 43) Some issues that have recently been considered by the FVE include: The act of veterinary surgery, bluetongue vaccination and welfare at slaughter. The Chairman of the UK Coordination group agreed to respond to Council's enquiry on whether the EU definition of an Act of Veterinary Surgery remained largely based on diagnosis.

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- 44) The Past President indicated that the role of the BVA within the FVE was vital to the success of the FVE and more importantly it allowed the BVA to influence policy formation across the European veterinary profession. He reported that the BVA's presence in Europe was strengthened by the BVA's consultant based in Brussels, Helene Judge.

45) World Veterinary Association (WVA)

Past President and WVA Councillor Bob Stephenson described the role of the WVA to Council. The WVA represented over 80 countries and also includes members from international and specialist veterinary associations, including the FVE.

- 46) It was reported that the WVA had contacts with a number of large organisations including: the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and is also an observer on a number of Commission Working Parties. The BVA contributes to the work of the WVA through the Overseas Group, the WVA Presidents Assembly, and the WVA Newsletter.

- 47) World Veterinary Day, organised jointly by the WVA and the OIE, is on the 25th April 2009 and has the theme "Veterinarians and Livestock Farmers: a winning partnership".

VETERINARY SURGEONS ACT (VSA)

- 48) The President reminded Council that at the December meeting, Council agreed that:
- a) Changes could be made within the RCVS without the need for a new

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VSA.

- b) There should be a Guide to Practice Standards similar to the Guide to Professional Conduct.
 - c) The BVA's position regarding mandatory CPD should be strengthened.
 - d) The RCVS Disciplinary Committee (DC) should be separate to RCVS Council and that members of the DC should not sit on RCVS Council or any other committee. In addition there should be greater lay representation on the DC at a level of 40-50%.
- 49) There was an amendment to the paper for the meeting. Paragraph 2 of the enclosure stated that the RCVS Veterinary Legislation Group's (VLG) draft report represents "RCVS current thinking" in fact it represented VLG's current thinking.
- 50) Council supported the recommendations that had been made by the BVA VSA Working Party regarding the draft VLG report. The VSAWP had agreed with the majority of the recommendations but were awaiting clarification from the Chairman of the VLG on a number of issues. Council agreed with the VSAWP recommendation that veterinary surgeons should not be suspended during the disciplinary process.
- 51) CPD
There was a discussion on the proposed use of a tick next to names in the RCVS directory that would indicate whether the member had completed 35 hours of CPD. Some members were concerned that members of the public would be able to access their full CPD record. Council remained undecided on this issue and referred the issue back to the BVA VSA Working Party.
- 52) Paraprofessionals
It was noted that an update of the VSA, which would include regulation of paraprofessionals, was unlikely in the near future. There was agreement that comprehensive welfare codes and more inspectors should be employed in order to enforce current Animal Welfare legislation. There was also concern about the increase in the ease of availability of veterinary medicines from high street and internet pharmacies.

VSAWP

FOCUS ON MSG – EDUCATION

- 53) RCVS Extra Mural Studies (EMS) Working Group
Council was updated on the RCVS review of EMS and its role in the education of veterinary undergraduates. The President Elect, the BVA representative on the RCVS review group reported that the RCVS had received 61 responses to their consultation and the majority were supportive of EMS. Many divisions had contributed to the BVA submission to the RCVS consultation on EMS and the BVA would be giving oral evidence to the review in the near future.
- 54) There was a discussion about the structure of EMS. It was agreed that the current 26 weeks was adequate however there was concern that newly qualified vets from outside the UK may not have the equivalent practical experience when arriving in the UK. It was suggested that there could be a paid probationary period built into RCVS registration requirements. It was also suggested that students could be given more guidance on how to

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choose an EMS placement and which were good practices to go to depending on their interests.

- 55)** Council also made the following suggestions to be included as evidence at the oral session: **EMSWG**
- a) EMS could be organised like PDP, a single approach was needed
 - b) Practitioners should be prepared to fail students if their work was unsatisfactory.
 - c) Students should be filtered by prior interest e.g. those interested in becoming small animal vets should not accept a placement at a large animal practice.
 - d) There should be more opportunity for structured feedback from practitioners and this should be standardised across all universities in the UK.
 - e) For EMS to fulfil its function enthusiastic participation on the part of the student and the veterinary surgeon was required.
- 56)** MSG Education Subgroup
The subject of student debt and tuition fees was raised on the Young Vet Network (YVN) discussion forum as an area of great concern for younger members and taken forward by the subgroup. Council was updated on the recommendations from the MSG Education subgroup, that the BVA should:
- a) Discuss with the Deans of the vet schools a possible change in the structure of the timetable to allow students time to take on paid work during their holidays.
 - b) Lobby government for EMS “terms” to be allowed within the tuition fee loan structure.
 - c) Investigate ways to provide students with financial guidance during their first year at vet school.
 - d) Approach the vet schools and enquire as to their plans with regard to tuition fees for 2010 and beyond.
- 57)** It was suggested that veterinary students could lobby for extended grants through the National Union of Students as well as the BVA. In addition there was the suggestion that practitioners may be able to apply for rural grant aid and educational grants to provide teaching accommodation for students. The BVA would be meeting with the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills regarding student loans, following Council. **MSG**

ANIMAL WELFARE FOUNDATION (BVA AWF)

- 58)** The President invited the Chairman of the BVA AWF, Carl Padgett, to present the minutes to Council.
- 59)** Dog Breeding
Council was informed that the BVA AWF had hosted a meeting to establish where stakeholders could collaborate in developing approaches designed to have an immediate improvement in the welfare of dogs. A press statement had been issued after the meeting and stakeholders had in principle agreed to work together.
- 60)** Discussion Forum
It was reported to Council that the BVA AWF discussion forum would take

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place on May 12th 2009. Topics under discussion would include: the issues associated with the breeding of a variety of companion and farmed animal and obesity,

61) BVA AWF Finances

Council was updated on the financial situation. The trustees had agreed to continue to suspend spending from the general fund until the reserves were at the amount required by the reserves policy. The Norman Hayward Fund remained at a healthy level.

62) Cambridge Chair of Animal Welfare

The Chairman informed Council that Cambridge University had decided not to continue funding the Colleen McLeod Chair of Animal Welfare.

ETHICS AND WELFARE GROUP (EWG)

63) The President invited Peter Jinman, Chairman of EWG, to present the minutes to Council.

64) Controlling Wild Species

It was reported that the EWG had discussed the impact of wild and introduced species that threatened human, farmed and native wild animal populations. The group had suggested that decisions made by organisations considering culling a particular species should be made using the principles of the three R's:

- a) Replacement: are there alternatives to culling?
- b) Reduction: can the numbers of animals to be culled be reduced in any way?
- c) Refinement: what methods of culling are to be used? Are they humane and efficient?

A paper produced by the EWG as a result of their discussion would be available on the BVA website shortly.

65) Pinch Collars

The Chairman of the EWG informed Council that after the meeting in December a Council member had given him a pinch collar, which had been brought to them by a client. During the last EWG meeting it was agreed that the BVA would support the BSAVA position to strongly recommend the use of positive reinforcement methods in training dogs as opposed to using aversive stimuli.

66) Consultations

The EWG were currently formulating responses to a number of consultations including: the Bateson Review on dog breeding, the Welsh Assembly consultation on electronic training devices, meat chicken welfare and welfare at slaughter. Council were encouraged to go back to their divisions with the list of consultations and to submit views to the policy team.

Council

67) Organic Farming

The Chairman thanked the Past President, Freda Scott-Park for her help in the formation of a webpage on Organic Farming which was now available on the BVA website.

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MEMBERS' SERVICES GROUP (MSG)

68) Andrew Parker, Chairman of MSG presented the minutes to Council.

69) Lantra

Council was informed that at the last MSG meeting there had been a presentation about the role and function of Lantra. It had been agreed that there was scope for developing a partnership between LANTRA and the BVA.

70) Health and Well-being

Council was updated on the development of resources for BVA members. It had been agreed that the group would take forward ideas to produce an online appraisal starter pack, stickers for dangerous drugs cupboards. In addition other possible future initiatives could include the creation of buddy systems and 'kitemarks' for practices.

71) VMD inspections

MSG had recently considered the concerns surrounding the approaching VMD inspections of practices. It had been agreed that a simple checklist aimed at assisting practices in their preparation would be produced. It is hoped that the checklist would be made available online to members as close as possible to the implementation of the inspection program.

72) Resources for members

Council was informed that the MSG would be developing guidance for members on applications to access funds provided by their local Rural Development Agency. Also MSG was currently updating the guide to contracts of employment.

73) MSG was also at the early stages of developing appraisal documentation for members. There was a general feeling that the process of appraising was a skilled job and that reports should contain positive comments. It was noted that employment issues were a major causal factor in stress and mental problems in veterinary surgeons.

74) There was a comment that vets who were having problems within a practice do not have an organisation to turn to that would provide a 'union representative' to attend meetings with them in a supportive role. The Chairman reported that this issue would be taken forward at the next MSG meeting.

MSG

AMENDMENT TO THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

75) The President reported that at the meeting in December it had been agreed that the Articles would be amended as follows:
*Any person who is not eligible for membership of the Association under Article 9 but who holds such degree, diploma or **relevant experience** as the Council shall from time to time **approve** may, in the absolute discretion of the Council, be elected as an associate.*

The amendment, if approved at the AGM, would take effect from the next Association year.

AOB

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- 76)** Council was reminded about the Dalrymple-Champneys Award and to encourage nominations from Divisions for this year's award. Full details were available in the Awards section of the BVA website or from Helena Cotton. The deadline for nominations was 17 April 2009.
- 77)** The Royal Counties Division informed Council that they were concerned that the Defra proposal to commence BCG vaccination in badgers may precede Defra's acceptance of endemic TB in cattle in certain areas of the UK. There was also concern that the proposed responsibility and cost sharing legislation would leave farmers with the responsibility and for these vaccinations without control or authority to deal with existing and new diseases that may appear. The President informed the meeting that the BVA would be attending a meeting on badger vaccination with Defra. Council would be kept up to date regarding this issue.
- 78)** Some members were concerned about the end of weekend provisions at local VLA offices. Council were informed that the VLA would be sending out a letter in the near future regarding the new process for sample submission over the weekends.
- 79)** Council were informed that the Northern Ireland Audit Office had published a report on bTB testing. The report had criticised practising vets and had put the relationship between NIVA/AVSP&I and DARD under strain. The full report was available at http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/bovine/Bovine_Final.pdf
- 80)** The Past President, Freda Scott-Park informed Council that the BVA's Head of Media, Chrissie Nicholls would be retiring at the end of March after 35 years of service. Chrissie had been an astonishing resource to the BVA and her friendship with MP's and peers were of great benefit to the BVA. It was also reported that the Editor of the Veterinary Record had been made an honorary member of the RCVS.

Secretariat

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 81)** Wednesday 8 July 2009. Sunday 27 September 2009, Wednesday 9th December 2009.