

**BVA Scottish Branch Telecon, Wednesday 18 March 2020, 13.00-14.30**

BVA HQ, 7 Mansfield Street

**Attendees**

Kathleen Robertson – BVA Scottish Branch  
President  
Melissa Donald – BVA Scottish Branch Senior  
Vice President  
Emma Callaghan – BVA Scotland Regional  
Representative  
Gareth Hateley – BVA Scottish Branch  
Romain Pizzi - BVZS  
Tricia Colville - BSAVA  
Mary Fraser – BVA Scottish Branch  
Sue Murphy – R(D)SVS  
Hayley Atkin – Policy Officer  
James Risk – BEVA  
Calum McIntrye – AVS  
Vivienne MacKinnon - APHA  
Robert Anderson -BVA Scottish Branch Honorary  
Secretary  
Sandy Duncan - VPHA

**Apologies**

Lawrence Brown – BVA Scottish Branch  
Ronnie Soutar - FVS  
Stephen Anderson – Moredun  
Grace Webster – PVS  
Jenny Helm – University of Glasgow  
Tricia Colville- BSAVA  
Vikki Halliday - FSS

**Welcome and introductions**

- 1) K. Robertson welcomed members to the BVA Scottish Branch telecon. K. Robertson updated that Branch was pleased to welcome Vikki Halliday to Branch Council as the Food Standards Scotland representative. Since the previous telecon, M. Erskine had stepped down as recent graduate representative due to time commitments, Branch thanked M. Erskine for his efforts and contributions while in post

**Matters arising**

- 2) K. Robertson updated on the BVA approach to support members of the profession during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. It was reported that:
  - K. Robertson would represent BVA Scottish Branch on the BVA COVID-19 veterinary coordination videoconference on 19 March which included representatives from the specialist divisions and affiliate groups as well as Branch President. The coordination group had been convened to update on activity and discuss key issues such as support for veterinary businesses, medicines availability, and the coordination of ongoing communications with the profession.
  - BVA would be providing a free webinar for all veterinary professionals hosted by BVA Officers, where members would have the opportunity to raise any current issues they are facing and questions. Details would be circulated to Branch Council as soon as possible.
  - BVA Council in April would still take place but with a revised agenda, however Branch Council would still hold their pre-Council telecon on 8 April to discuss key policy positions that will be presented to Council at a later date.

**Action: H. Atkin to circulate Zoom details for teleconference to discuss policy positions on 8.4.20**

**Minutes of previous teleconference held on 5 December 2019**

- 3) The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December were accepted as an accurate record.

**Update on BVA policy, media and lobbying.**

- 4) K. Robertson updated on BVA policy, media and lobbying activity to date in 2020. Key points of discussion are outlined below.

**5) New UK Parliament**

K. Robertson noted BVA ongoing BVA engagement with members of the new UK Parliament. There had also been several media statements issued by BVA to ensure animal welfare, in particular sentience, was high on the political agenda.

**6) Brexit**

K. Robertson noted ongoing BVA lobbying ensure workforce capacity and extra clarity on new immigration rules and the introduction of an employer-led points-based system.

**7) Veterinary education – widening participation**

K. Robertson drew attention to the 2019/2020 BVA Policy Priority: ‘to develop and launch an outreach programme to promote veterinary careers to school children, and work with stakeholders to reach underrepresented groups’.

**8) Members of Branch Council were encouraged to highlight any useful points of contact in Scotland that BVA should be involving in their widening participation discussions, and any existing initiatives to support students from remote and rural areas. Suggestions included:**

- Contacting STEM Learning and STEM ambassadors to find out more about their work in Scotland
- Continuing to feedback findings from the Veterinary Delivery Landscape Project, which is working closely with Heads of School at Glasgow and Edinburgh to support students in remote and rural areas to access veterinary education.
- Encouraging members of the profession who are delivering careers talk to contact BVEDS for images for slideshows. It was reported that BVEDS were developing a photobank with imagery reflective of vets from a range of backgrounds.

**9) Review of APHA field delivery services: Scottish Veterinary Service**

K. Robertson noted the publication of the Milne report and the recommendation to develop a bespoke Scottish Veterinary Service. V. MacKinnon reported that a working group was going to be convened by the Scottish Government to look at further scoping and costing, with a two-year time frame for implementation. K. Robertson emphasised that members would be consulted on any resulting proposals.

**10) Joint BVA and SVS position on Sheep castration, tail docking, and pain management**

Members welcomed the publication of the joint BVA and SVS position, noting that Australia was further ahead of the UK in terms of licensed pain relief options for lambs. R. Anderson reported that Numb Nuts would hopefully be available for the 2021 lambing season.

**11) Illegal imports flowchart and guidance for vets**

Members were reminded of the recently launched [BVA illegal imports guidance and reporting flowchart](#), in partnership with Trading Standards Scotland, and SSPCA. E. Callaghan noted that this was an extremely useful resource for vets in practice. Members wishing to report concerns were encouraged to report via the Consumer Advice Scotland online portal.

**12) Fireworks**

K. Robertson updated that she contributed to represent BVA on the Fireworks Action Review Group. At the last meeting, she delivered a joint presentation with SSPCA on the impact of fireworks on animal welfare, as well as key BVA policy asks. It is expected that the group will make their final recommendations to the Scottish Government in the summer.

**Update on BVA working groups**

**13) Members were invited to comment on the final versions of BVA working group positions before they were submitted to BVA Council for final agreement. Members were asked to consider if there were any Scotland-specific areas that had not been captured.**

- **TB working group** – Members congratulated G.Hateley for his Scotland-specific input into the TB working group. G. Hateley encouraged members to email him directly if they needed any points of clarification.
- **Welfare at slaughter**- Members were invited to send any comments to [hayleya@bva.co.uk](mailto:hayleya@bva.co.uk)
- **Good place to work working group** – Branch members thought the position paper was a fantastic resource for veterinary employers and employees to refer to and showed great leadership from BVA.
- **Under our care working group** – K. Robertson updated that she had been sitting on the working group on behalf of SPVS, a lot of the focus of the group to date had been on definitions. BVA had put out a call for views to shape the final BVA position, members were encouraged to review [the working group's emerging themes document](#) and submit their views to [ameliaf@bva.co.uk](mailto:ameliaf@bva.co.uk). Branch Council congratulated BVA for its transparency and member engagement on this important issue. M. Donald updated that the RCVS review schedule had been delayed and the consultation was expected towards the end of 2020. M.Donald also encouraged members who were providing services remotely during the Covid-19 outbreak to note their rationale down to feed into the RCVS review.

### Update on BVA Scottish Branch activity

#### 14) 2020 JVP Vacancy for BVA Scottish Branch

Members were reminded that in April 2020 BVA Scottish Branch would be welcoming applications for the next BVA Scottish Branch Junior Vice President. An email inviting applications was planned to be sent to all Scottish Branch members in early April. All interested members were encouraged to apply. Members were reminded that they could contact BVA Secretariat ([hayleya@bva.co.uk](mailto:hayleya@bva.co.uk)) or Branch Officers ([scottishpresident@bva.co.uk](mailto:scottishpresident@bva.co.uk) or [scotland@bva.co.uk](mailto:scotland@bva.co.uk)) if they wanted more information.

#### 15) Member engagement event

M. Donald. updated that the joint BVA and SSPCA CPD and social evening for members was well attended and a great success. The evening received very positive feedback, specific feedback for Branch Council to consider for future membership engagement events included:

- Hold more engagement events at different venues across Scotland
- More sessions replicating the SSPCA event format eg. case studies and interactive workshops
- Cover unusual topics

- 16) Members were invited to suggest future partners and topics for member engagement events. R. Anderson suggested that QMS may be willing to partner with BVA on a social and CPD evening regarding health planning.

**Action: R. Anderson and H.Atkin to follow up with QMS to explore feasibility of partnering on a member engagement even later this year.**

#### 17) Branch e-news

Members were reminded that they would be receiving the next Scotland e-news in June, and encouraged to contribute content and blogs for future editions through BVA secretariat on [hayleya@bva.co.uk](mailto:hayleya@bva.co.uk)

#### 18) Scottish Government and BVA Branch Memorandum of Understanding: HIVSS

M. Donald updated that at the end of 2019 it was agreed that it would be useful to formalise our relationship with Scottish Government, HIVSS practices and the HIVSS Coordinator by:

- Producing a Memorandum of Understanding between the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the Scottish Government to formally recognise our respective roles in the funding, representation and coordination of the Highlands and Islands Veterinary Services Scheme.

- Developing a role description for the HIVSS Coordinator, to ensure they are getting sufficient support from BVA HQ.

19) It is hoped that both documents will be agreed and signed at the Scottish Branch AGM in May 2020. The first draft of the MoU has been sent to S.Voas and team for initial review.

#### 20) Stakeholder Groups

Members received updates on the following stakeholder groups:

- **Scottish Veterinary Zoonoses Group** – R. Pizzi reported that he hadn't attended the last meeting, but would forward the minutes of the previous meeting when available.
- **Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare** – R. Pizzi reported that the group has lost some momentum given a change in Secretariat, he and T.Colville would re-raise the proposal for M.Donald to present to the group on BVA's #ChooseAssured campaign.
- **VetTrust** – K. Robertson reported that given the government's advice on social distancing to prevent the spread of Covid-19, it was likely that VetTrust 2020 was going to be cancelled.
- **Livestock Health Scotland** – K. Robertson updated that she was going to circulate the minutes from Livestock Health Scotland to the Scottish Branch Glasscubes workspace.
- **Scottish Veterinary Delivery Landscape** – K. Robertson updated that Vet Support Scotland had been extended to cover Meat Hygiene workers. M. Fraser also reported that she was working on some communications outputs to promote the value of vets in Scotland. F. Scott-Park has also been working with H. Atkin to develop some blog posts for the BVA blog to encourage practitioners in Scotland to join the VDL.
- **National Rural Mental Health Forum** – M. Donald reported that she continued to attend meetings to share best practice of supporting mental health in rural communities and she would continue to share useful resources highlighted in these meetings on the Glasscubes workspace.
- **SSPCA Tackling the puppy trade working group** – E. Callaghan reported that this working group last met in December 2019 where there was an update from HMRC, the Scottish Government Buy a Puppy Safely Campaign, BVA's work on developing resource for the profession on reporting illegal imports and the SSPCA Assured Breeder Scheme.
- **Scottish One Health Antimicrobial Use and Resistance (SONAAR) group** – R. Anderson was unable to make the most recent meeting of this group due to late notification and will chase up the minutes to share on the Glasscubes workspace.
- **NFU Pig Regulatory Group** – G. Webster was continuing to attend this group on behalf of PVS and BVA. The group had been convened to evaluate how well current regulations were being implemented.
- **Farmed Fish Health Framework group** – V. MacKinnon noted that APHA had been engaging more with the aquaculture sector to raise the profile of APHA, emphasise the importance of fish welfare and expected standards, as well as APHA enforcement powers.

#### BVA Scottish Branch AGM and Parliamentary Dinner

21) H. Atkin updated that given current social distancing measures it was likely that the Scottish Branch AGM would be conducted via Zoom. BVA would keep Branch members in the loop if the parliamentary dinner had to be cancelled. Members were therefore advised to keep the following dates in their diaries:

- **BVA Scottish Branch AGM, Wednesday 13 May 2020, 15.00-17.00, Saughton House, Edinburgh**
- **BVA Scottish Parliamentary dinner, Wednesday 13 May 2020, from 19.00 at Holyrood**

#### AOB

22) Members shared perspectives on how Covid-19 was affecting, or expected to affect, their sectors and working arrangements. Key points included:

- Veterinary students were now conducting all learning and exams online. RCVS and VSC had also temporarily agreed to suspend EMS requirements.

- University of Edinburgh veterinary services were going to drop to an emergency service.
- Veterinary colleagues had been approached by Neil Hudson MP regarding donating ventilators to the NHS should they need it. Veterinary associations and the RCVS were coordinating a response.
- Some practices had already asking to defer payments for supplies as their footfall has decreased.
- APHA were contingency planning and guidance was being drafted regarding TB testing.
- School closures were likely to compound pressures on parents in the profession.