

British Veterinary Association Day Speech
Dr Gwenllian Mair Rees, BVA Junior Vice President
25 September 2025

Hello. Thank you very much to Liz, and also to Professor Reyher- Kristen- for such kind words.

Thank you so much to you all. I am incredibly honoured and if I'm honest, still really quite overwhelmed, to be standing here as the new Junior Vice President of the British Veterinary Association.

It has been quite a journey so far. A comprehensive school girl from a deprived South Wales town, devouring James Herriot books and dreaming of becoming a vet, to the mixed practice vet working in the hills of West Wales and even further afield in the mountains of New Zealand. Those years of practice taught me not just the science of veterinary medicine, but the deep responsibility and privilege of caring for both the animals and the people who care for them.

That journey eventually led me back into academia, where I pursued a PhD exploring how we use veterinary medicines and how we can do better for animals, for farmers and for the environment. Through that work, I found a real passion for antimicrobial stewardship and the role our profession can play in safeguarding medicines for generations to come.

My time as President of the BVA Welsh Branch was where I (hopefully) learned some of the ropes that I'm going to need and certainly where I realised how powerful our collective voice can be. It's a huge source of pride for me to be representing Wales in this role. I stand on the shoulders of giants from Wales like John Blackwell and Peter Harlech Jones who are here today. I will do my best to represent Wales as well as they did during their presidencies!

Along this journey, I've been incredibly fortunate to be mentored, supported, challenged, and inspired by so many people - many of you are in this room. You know who you are. Thank you.

To my colleagues on Council, to the BVA team, and to our wider profession - thank you for this opportunity. I am excited, daunted, and above all, ready to serve.

Diolch o galon i chi gyd. Thank you very much.