

Council Meeting

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 2 October 2025 at 10:00 am in the Rooms 4a and 4b at 1 – 2 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. RCVS Knowledge – update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
5. Minutes		
i. 5 June 2025 – unclassified minutes and annex	Unclassified	n/a
ii. 5 June 2025 – classified appendix	Private / confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
iii. (1-4) July 2025 – unclassified minutes	Unclassified	n/a
iv. (1-4) July 2025 – classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
v. (15-28) August 2025 – classified appendix	Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6. Matters arising		
a. Obituaries	Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
7. Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)		
a. RCVS Operational Plan	Unclassified	n/a
b. Active prevention of sexual harassment	Unclassified	n/a

8. Notices of motion	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
9. Questions	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
10. Any other College business (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
11. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
12. Date of next meeting Thursday, 20 November 2025 at 10:00 am (reconvening in the afternoon) to be held at Hardwick Street.	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
13. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)		
a. Update on major projects	Oral report Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4
b. Competition and Markets Authority update	Oral report Confidential	1, 3, 4
c. Practice Standards Scheme – update	Oral report Confidential	1, 3, 4
d. Legislative reform	Oral report Confidential	1
e. Review of revised Corporate Risk Register and risk appetite	Confidential	1, 3, 4
f. Vital signs	Confidential	4
g. Harper Keele Veterinary School	Confidential	1, 2
h. Veterinary Council of Ireland Memorandum of Understanding	Confidential	1, 3
14. Any other College business (confidential items)		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report Confidential	# TBC

b. Other business	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
15. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)	Oral report Confidential	# TBC
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk		

¹Classifications 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.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

1. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

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. 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	5 June 2025
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Annex A – Retiring members’ contributions Classified appendix (private & confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	Private & Confidential	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 June 2025 at 10:00 am at 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB

Members:

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

*Mr D Bray

*Dr A L Calow

*^Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

*Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

*Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

*Denotes absent

*^Denotes absent from end of open session

In attendance:

Ms H Haid

Ms F Hayes

Mr I A Holloway

Ms G Kingswell

Ms L Lockett

Ms C McCann

Mr B Myring

Ms J Stetzel

Ms C Paget

Governance Officer (agenda item 16b only)

Committee Liaison Officer (CLO)

Director of Communications (DoComms)

Head of Legal Services – Standards and Advice (HoLS-S&A)

CEO

Director of Operations (DoOps)

Head of Policy, Insight and Public Affairs (HoPIPA)

Head of Marketing & Digital Communications (HoMDC) (agenda item 16k only)

Registrar / Director of Legal Services (DoLS)

Guests:

Dr D Black

Ms P Canedo

Ms S Cannon

Dr N T Connell

Ms I Dobre

Ms A Findon

Ms M Gratton

FRCVS (agenda item 16a only)

British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)

Defra (agenda item 16a only)

FRCVS, Chair Fellowship Board (open session only)

Eville and Jones (agenda item 16a only)

BVA (open session only)

Vetlife Donor Relations Manager (agenda item 04 only)

Mr P Imrie	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)
Mr J Loeb	<i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Ms A Parezanin	Defra (agenda item 16a only)
Mr L Patea	Defra (agenda item 16a only)
Ms N Rodriguez	Defra (agenda item 16a only)
Dr J Russell	FRCVS, President Vetlife (agenda item 04 only)
Ms J Shardlow	Chair, Audit and Risk Committee
Ms T Shaukat	Defra (agenda item 16a only)
Mr J Westgate	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)

President's introduction

1. The President welcomed guests and outlined the order of the meeting. She welcomed the Registrar to her first Council meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mr Bray
- Dr Calow
- Mr Castle (pm / closed session only)
- Mrs Howarth
- Dr McLeish

- Dr Middlemiss (Observer)

Declarations of interest

3. Declarations of interest were received from:
 - Mr Wilkinson: had started an aquatic veterinary medicine practice.

Vetlife update

Ms Gratton and Dr Russell joined the meeting.

4. Dr Russell thanked Council for the invitation to speak before them and commenced his presentation.

5. He reported that the helpline was now 30 years old and that Vetlife relied hugely on the continued support of the RCVS. It was important to inform Council what that money was put towards; how it was supporting the veterinary communities; and why it was so important to continue to build on the relationship:

Helpline

- the Vetlife Helpline was open to everyone in the veterinary community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year;
- it was available to everyone in the veterinary community, including veterinary surgeons; RVNs; students; animal care staff; support staff; managers; reception teams; and all other staff working in veterinary workplaces;
- it offered support by telephone and email;
- in 2024 it had received 5,111 contacts (approximately 14 per day), a 26% increase on 2023. To put the figure into context, in 2015 there had been approximately one contact per day, so there had been a huge uplift since then;
- the nature of some of the contact had changed: 40% continued to be by telephone, which carried additional challenges, costs, and complexities.

Statistics

- 5,111 contacts:
 - o 40% by telephone;
 - o >50% presented with work-related concern;
 - o around 14% express suicidal ideation;
 - o 109 volunteers gave 17,520 hours of volunteer time to the helpline;
 - o 75 volunteers attended update training;
 - o 12 new volunteers added to the rota;
 - o 10 volunteers left the rota;
 - o Completion of 100th post-vention support call.

Demographics of new referrals	This quarter 2025	This quarter 2024
Gender		
Male	4%	10%
Female	96%	90%
Age		
<30 Years	31%	29%
30-39 Years	39%	37%
40-49 Years	17%	20%
50-59 Years	4%	5%
60+ Years	2%	0%
Unknown	7%	9%
Role of Beneficiary		
Vet	52%	54%
Vet Nurse	35%	27%
Student	7%	16%
Administration	4%	3%
Did Not Engage	2%	0%

Financial support

- Vetlife had evolved from the Victorian Veterinary Benevolent Fund;
- financial support was available to veterinary surgeons; veterinary nurses (since 2022); and their dependents;
- applications could be made directly via the website or be referred via the Vetlife Helpline;
- 82 people had applied for financial support in 2024, 47 of whom received support:
 - o £86,000 paid to beneficiaries;
 - o further support through Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB);
 - o 30 volunteers liaised regularly with beneficiaries across the country;
 - o two alms houses remained available in case of need – currently on short-term let;
- even when considering financial support, the predominant reason that people were in contact was because of their mental health; 182 people had been referred for additional psychological support through Vetlife Health Support.

Vetlife resources

6. Vetlife was looking to be move into a more proactive and preventative space. In 2024, it launched the neurodiversity report '*Bridging understanding, breaking barriers*' about producing and supporting neurodiverse safe workspaces for people, and it was the focus of a campaign throughout the year. The report was available alongside long-standing resources – for free – through the Vetlife shop.
7. Thanks to funding secured from the Zoetis Foundation, the resource in 2025 was '*Compassion, fatigue, burnout and moral injury*' – it acknowledged that there were some problems, and focus was on how Vetlife could help people to avoid the issues becoming a big issue in the workplace.

The community had been polled; work undertaken with real-life stories with targeted research; and the resource had been launched at the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress and had been well-received. It was about supporting people before they reached the point of crisis.

Funding

8. Five years ago, Vetlife had been a charity with a £500,000 turnover, £250,000 of which had been from investments on behalf of the professions, and with £250,000 support from the College. In 2025, the budget was £1.3 million because it recognised the actual cost of maintaining a volunteer workforce; of having staff in place that were skilled and equipped and able to assess the financial applications fairly; training; and to make sure Vetlife could be at events and talk to people to raise awareness of what it did. The Donor Relations Manager had been taken on board and was responsible for closing the £800,000 gap that had to be raised outside of the regular big donations.
9. In addition, the College had also helped to fund the Moneypenny Call Answering Service, the costs of which had escalated dramatically over the last couple of years, partly due to the number of calls, and also because overnight Moneypenny would make a 'direct call' to volunteers rather than hanging up a call and having a volunteer to call the person back – the cost was approximately £1.80 per minute and, on average, calls lasted 45 minutes to an hour. Vetlife was trying to bring those costs back to a more manageable amount.
10. Finally, there was movement towards a campaign where it said if everybody that was regulated by the College gave £1 per month, then the funding gap would close.
11. Dr Russell drew the presentation to a close.
12. Questions and comments included but were not limited to:
 - regarding demographics, there was a distinct difference between male and female new referrals, was there any thoughts to the reason?
 - o it was felt that men were poor at talking about their mental health; Vetlife was trying to consider how best to approach the matter. Even when considering the gender balance across professions – as it includes veterinary nurses where there was an even greater divide – there was still an over-representation of female callers;
 - what was the gender demographic amongst the volunteers?
 - o exact numbers were not to hand, but they were more evenly split;
 - 7% of contact was from students, were volunteers aware of the university support network?
 - o yes, there was 'signposting', so issues were not tackled in isolation – a conversation was overdue with the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) to ensure there was no 'circular signposting' within the different services available; the outcome of which could go into the latest version of the manual as an addition, rather than as a competing role;

- some students were reluctant to use the support within the universities even with the assurance that it was a confidential and independent service;
- one of the most common challenges was that it would become apparent during a call when somebody should be speaking to their GP; Vetlife volunteers were trained very carefully how to approach that matter, so that if the caller had already approached their GP and did not get where they wanted to be, that they did not feel that they were being pushed away from Vetlife;
- did the ages in the demographics roughly represent the spread of the professions in terms of age as well? Looking at the chart, it could potentially be read that the ages of 30 – 39 was the worst, but was that because that was the age group that most of the professions were in?
 - that was unknown. It should also be noted that it was 186 people that it related to so it would not provide a 'true' breakdown;
- re: Moneypenny service, was it right to state that when a call was transferred to a volunteer but stayed on the system that they charged?
 - yes, however, it was not possible to sustain the cost for all of the night-time calls, so the connection was broken, and the volunteer phoned the caller back. There were exceptions when the call handler felt it would be dangerous to do so.

13. The conversation was drawn to a close. On behalf of Council, the President thanked Dr Russell for taking the time to speak with Council.

Ms Gratton and Dr Russell left the meeting.

Minutes of previous meetings

14. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the classified appendix of the meeting held on 4 March and the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 13 March 2025, and they were before Council for approval.

15. It was commented that in the last bullet point, page 16, of the classified appendix of 4 March 2025, that the word 'seeded' should read 'seed', which was noted.

16. With the minor typographical amendment, the unclassified minutes and classified appendices of 4 and 13 March 2025 were approved by a unanimous verbal vote.

Matters arising

Obituaries

17. A written obituary for Professor Allen Goodship BVSc PhD MRCVS, Emeritus Professor of Anatomy, late of University of Bristol, had been received. A respected colleague, he was internationally recognised for his pioneering research in bone biomechanics and skeletal adaptation that advanced both human and veterinary medicine. Notably, he had participated in a project aboard the MIR space station, investigating the effects of microgravity on bone health. Professor Goodship held senior academic positions at Bristol, UCL, and the Royal Veterinary College, and continued his work well into retirement. He left a lasting legacy through his contributions to orthopaedic science and mentorship.
18. Council and guests stood for a minute silence for all members of the professions that passed since the last meeting.

Council correspondence

19. The President reported:

Royal College Day 2025

20. Royal College Day would be held on Friday, 4 July 2025 at One Great George Street, Westminster commencing at 10:30 am, with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled to start at 11:00 am. Invitations had been sent to Council from the Events Team, and members were asked to register their attendance via the RCVS website.

RCVS Council election 2025

21. Council had been informed of the outcome of the recent RCVS Council elections 2025. Newly-elected members taking up their four-year terms at the AGM were: Dr Sam Bescoby, Mr Paddy Gordon, and Dr Danielle Greenberg MsRCVS. In addition, Dr Gardiner MRCVS had been re-elected to Council and Professor Parkin had been re-appointed as a Veterinary Schools Council member for second terms.
22. A formal goodbye and thank you would be given to Dr Allum during the Council meeting as she was unable to attend the AGM, and Dr Chambers, Mr Wilkinson and Ms Worthington would be given a formal goodbye at the AGM. The contributions of all retiring members would be annexed to the minutes of the meeting.
23. On the VN Council election, successful candidates were Bethan Pinhey and Hannah Welsman RVNs, and congratulations had been passed to them.
24. The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, Janice Shardlow, would also retire, and a new member be welcomed, at the forthcoming AGM.

Declarations of interest form

25. Forms were sent to Council members on 16 May 2025 with a request to re-complete them as an active way to ensure interests were up to date. Completed forms to be emailed to the Committee Liaison Officer on f.hayes@rcvs.org.uk. It would be an annual request going forward.

Committee membership

26. Committee membership would be finalised once the outcome of the election for the Chair of Advancement of the Professions Committee (re-run) was known and circulated once complete.

Meeting dates

27. Meeting dates to the end of 2025 were listed in the Contacts and Calendar Booklet 2024 – 2025. Dates to the end of 2026 would be circulated shortly.

CEO update

28. The CEO reported that she was delighted to see Council members in the new building and thanked the Director of Operations (DoOps) and Chief Digital Officer (CDO) and their teams for bringing the refurbishment to fruition to provide a functional and special workspace, especially as it was, effectively, the fourth move since 2020, and thanked the Library and Information staff that had been separated from the College during the process for their patience. There were still some matters to address, for example, imagery on the walls and the movement of the library into the new building, but thanks were given to all parties that had been involved; it was the culmination of almost 10 years' work.

29. Further items to highlight to Council were:

- the first Disciplinary Committee hearing to be held in the new building was ongoing; it was good that other meetings could now be held at the same time as this key statutory function of the College being carried out;
- an Operational Plan to the end of 2027 was being developed out of the new Strategic Plan; Officers would discuss it before it would be put before Council in the autumn, so that there was a good sense of what resources would be required. Meanwhile, other big projects continued – Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation; upgrading the website; re-branding work; upgrading the database, so it was a matter of being sensible with adequate pacing;
- that the College team had attended British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress – she noted that that was the last BSAVA Congress, as it was understood that they intended to focus their activities elsewhere going forwards;
- that the College team had attended Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress;
- British Veterinary Association (BVA) Live was scheduled for the following week – the College was taking part in sessions on legislation, the RCVS Academy, and workplace culture;
- the President, Assistant Registrar, and colleagues from the Education Team had been undertaking numerous vet school talks for final-year students;

- the Mind Matters team had: launched its latest round of health grants; announced a 10-year anniversary symposium planned for the autumn; developed content for Mental Health Awareness Week; and re-launched the College's Stress Awareness Guide;
- new Academy courses had been launched for: Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month; vet return to work course;
- there was a forthcoming series of webinars on the workforce project;
- RCVS honours and awards had been announced – they would be presented at the forthcoming Royal College Day;
- the visitation to the Harper Keele Veterinary School had taken place, which had been a big milestone and thanks given to teams from both sides for making that happen; it was a detailed process with a lot of work still to be done; a decision would be before Council in due course (likely to be electronic);
- the newly-appointed Registrar had joined the RCVS, settled in quickly, and had added a huge amount of value to the College team;
- a group from the Singapore National Parks Department (equivalent to Defra) had visited the College; they were considering setting up a statutory regulatory function and were keen to see what the College did – it was important to note that although the focus recently had been on criticisms from the CMA and others, on a global stage, what the College did was well regarded;
- the College had responded to the CMA's latest papers on 27 May, and the President had explained the College's role, particularly in relation to complaints management in response to a report from *Which?* last week. More work was forthcoming for CMA; the next part related to a document they were expected to publish in July, which would be a draft of the final report;
- the Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) project; the Content Management System (CMS) (website) project; and RCVS branding review were ongoing;
- vet school graduations would commence shortly.
- the end of the current College year was approaching when there would also be a presidential changeover; thanks were given to the current President for the huge amount of work she had undertaken on behalf of the College.

30. There were no questions, and the report was noted.

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

RCVS governance reform

31. The Head of Policy, Insight and Public Affairs (HoPIPA) introduced the paper, noting that it was in two parts, the first of which was the options in respect of replacing the non-practising and overseas registers, the other related to options for separating the chair of Council from the presidency. Taking each item in turn:
 32. It was noted that the College had a 'core' practising Register, and then a series of registration categories for non-practising; over-70s; and overseas members, all of which were linked to reduced retention fees and that, for non-practising members, had no continuing professional development (CPD) requirements. All other regulators had moved away from those styles of register, with the exception of the General Medical Council (GMC), whose non-practising register might not survive legislative reform.
 33. Successive governments had argued that there should not be non-practising registers, which other regulators had agreed with; the reason being that it would provide clarity for the public, and that a person should only be on a register if they were demonstrably fit to practise and undertaking CPD, that they could be employed and work in the profession at any time. The College continued to have non-practising categories of registration that did not meet the requirements, and which were not underpinned by legislation via the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) or the Royal Charter.
34. Options presented were:
 - retain the status quo: which could be difficult and there could be an expectation to change it with the legislative reform;
 - withdraw all forms of non-practising registration;
 - exploit the associate powers in the Charter alongside veterinary nursing, to create an alumni classification that could still use the 'MRCVS' status in a particular way and maintain contact with the College whilst still providing 'daylight' between practising registrants and non-practising individuals. Suggestions included:
 - o MRCVS (retired);
 - o MRCVS (unregistered);
 - o A[ssociate]RCVS.
35. The Legislative Change Working Party (LCWP) had considered the options. Its view was that, probably, only having practising registrants was the clearest (an 'on/off Register'), but that there should be exploration of the third option, to include an impact assessment to see if it might disproportionately impact demographics; costs; and how many people could return to the practising list to maintain the MRCVS status. It was emphasised that no decisions had been made, and it was an opportunity for Council to understand that discussions were ongoing.

36. The President reminded Council that although it sounded like the College would be making the decision, it would not, but it could make recommendations to Defra and provide arguments and rationale for its role as a regulator, its governance structure, and the need for public clarity – it was government that made the ultimate decision.

37. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- veterinary nurses had an on / off register and [I] felt strongly it should be the same for vets; it was very strange to have the non-practising categories of registration, and it was not clear for the public;
- it was agreed there should be clarity for the public, but the MRCVS status was more symbolic than it outwardly appeared and was a core part of a vet's identity; to take it away at the end of a career in serving the public did not 'sit' well, and [I] would support the suggestion of having MRCVS (retired) / MRCVS (non-practising) but not the A[ssociate]RCVS option because the College might need that for other categories of professions for future legislation;
- continuing from the previous point, after years of being a vet which was part of a member's identity, if there was an MRCVS (retired) option it might help smooth the transition, rather than coming straight off the Register;
- the point about non-practising was that often people were in such a registration category because they wanted to use their status and credibility as a veterinary surgeon without working as a veterinary surgeon; if you were not maintaining the standards required to work as a veterinary surgeon, then you should not be using that status in a career as if you *were* a veterinary surgeon; there was sympathy for the retired status, but it should be on or off the Register, whatever you happen to be doing with your career;
- vets should have a way of being able to keep their Dr title / MRCVS status in a low-cost, non-practising way – it related to a very significant identity issue and involved changing a name on a passport / driving licence, etc., as well. Losing a title was the same as changing a surname after marriage. Was it possible to have MRCVS-NP or NPMRCVS?
- if a person was genuinely out of practice and wanted to maintain their MRCVS, that was reasonable; at the moment it was subjective about the area of competence and they could be doing appropriate CPD – it was not about the ability to do a spay if they were genuinely not in practice, but they should not be getting a cheaper non-practising registration category to maintain their status as a veterinary surgeon; it would be easy to remain on the Register whilst not being in clinical practice because CPD requirements would be different – to be in industry but paying less for the MRCVS did not make sense;
- it related back to being a regulator and a Royal College – how did other Royal Colleges who were not regulated deal with retired members?
 - o it was a good test as an organisation how the College would respond to that balance of exercising its regulatory function and the other membership / Royal College elements. In

terms of what others did, essentially the treatment of post-nominals was linked to having a recognised qualification and membership of the body, segmenting it from having a licence to practise.

Discussions within Council were about what was in legislation, and in the Charter, but from experience of other chartered bodies, if there was new legislation, inevitably the Charter had to be updated, so there should be an expectation of having to do that. The leadership to be shown in terms of the College's regulatory 'hat' was to start from that point of clarity; there was a lot of available information that stated that having a simple on / off concept was the most clear and sensible thing to do.

Previous discussions had highlighted the emotional attachment to Fellowship and the post-nominals, so the impact assessment work and consultation around that was really important in order to make an informed decision – there were solutions that could be delivered through the Charter, so there were opportunities, but Council should accept that it was a piece of work that would require some Charter changes to facilitate some of them – the government would look very carefully at how the College dealt with the matter in making a judgement about whether the College could continue to be a Royal College that regulated;

- members should get away from the idea that having the postnominals MRCVS was an entitlement that came on graduation and that it was actually a privilege that needed to be maintained; with that privilege came duties such as CPD and, anybody who would use an MRCVS in a professional context – such as overseas members who were using the MRCVS in that manner – had to meet the duties of regulation. In relation to retired members, there was an important reason why the College might want to keep in touch with people no longer in practice and that was with regards to emergencies – if there was another Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) situation, the College might want to be able to switch on temporary registration for people immediate post-retirement – it would be good to seek Defra's view in that regard;
- could there be a compromise position – have a greatly reduced fee for remaining on the register over a certain age coupled with the requirement of having to stay up to date on CPD, and make it non-negotiable because presumably there would not be the same issues keeping up with CPD as a busy practitioner could have;
 - o it should be noted that there was a significant problem with charging different fees for people with the same privileges through the equalities legislation;
- was this an opportunity to get parity with RVNs – would they be interested in having a retired category as well?
 - o a lot of people would be interested in a retired category, but the differences should be made very clear to the public;

- people working in the veterinary sphere after retirement was finite and there would be a cessation of influence once they moved on from that main role. Roles that *did* influence external practice were in education – the broader College-type domains – and there was a struggle amongst people that were non-practising in the context of seeing clinical cases who had to remain on the practising part of the Register because of their influence on developing future veterinary professionals – that was the correct thing to do, but it had to be understood what ‘retired’ really meant; it was being non-active in *anything* that required professional credentials;
 - o in the last review it had been agreed that if you were using your veterinary qualification in any way – and that did not have to mean clinical practice – and regardless of whether you were using it in a paid, or unpaid, capacity, then you were considered practising. If a job was advertised to anybody and the person who happened to get it was a vet, but did not have to be a vet, that was slightly different. The College did ask non-practising members to sign a declaration to say they were no longer practising. The identity ‘piece’ was understood, but there had to be clarity for the public;
- national emergencies were not just scientific like FMD, there was a very real risk of war in Europe and, if that happened, there could be conscription that could in turn decimate the workforce, so the College would need to be able to access the retired members;
- regarding public clarity, A[ssociate]RCVS would lead to more confusion;
- using FMD as an example, as time went on and assuming there was not another outbreak in the near future, the skill set of those practising collectively would reduce – there would be fewer people that had seen FMD with active experience of diagnosing it ‘in the field’ and it would be a mistake not to have the ability to bring people back onto the practising part of the Register; there should be a conversation held with Defra as they were worried about the workforce particularly within farming and large animal spheres;
 - o the College had asked for powers within new legislation to have ‘emergency registers’ for that type of situation, to be able to reach out to people and register them; future experience was something that needed thought going forwards;
- was there an option for a single Register with two categories – MRCVS practising or MRCVS non-practising, as that would also provide clarity for the public;
 - o there had been a lot of discussion at Registration Committee because there was still confusion around what practising meant, which was where it had been agreed that if you needed your MRCVS to do a role, then you were considered practising. Whether that could be communicated at a public level might be difficult but could be explored.

38. The President summarised the discussion on the first part of the paper: Council was supportive of the need for improved clarity, and there was a practical reason for the College to remain in touch with people, however, it would come with responsibilities. An impact assessment was required

relating to the removal of the non-practising categories of registration and should be explored forthwith.

39. The second issue before Council was regarding the separation of the Chair of Council, and the Presidency. Council was reminded it had already agreed to an appointed Board, and that it was usual for regulators to have a chair directly appointed to the role that would typically have a longer term, for example, three years, sometimes longer, to allow for continuity and experience.
40. That, however, raised questions of how the Presidency would work – would it be a ceremonial role taking the members of the profession through the oath of admission, etc., and where would they be selected from? There were some options outlined in the paper. The direction of travel was for smaller boards, and the person for the role could potentially be drawn from the Veterinary Surgeons Council (that had already been agreed), which would sit below the regulatory board, although noted that to do so might restrict the presidency to veterinary surgeons; alternatively, they could be drawn from the Fellowship, and there had even been a suggestion that it should be open to any profession.
41. HoPIPA said that there had been no formal conclusions reached, only a recognition that there were complexities arising from reform that needed to be considered. Currently, the presidency was mentioned in the VSA – likely to be retained – and was also in the Charter. The LCWP sought Council's views.
42. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:
 - using the Fellowship as the 'pool' from which to select the president had been mentioned, were there any unintended consequences from doing that? It was a reasonable idea, although [I] liked the idea of having an RVN as president;
 - o there had been discussion about that but, currently, Fellows had to be veterinary surgeons according to the Charter;
 - having worked in other organisations that had been through similar debates, it might be useful to share some of their solutions with Council. There had been a chair and a president – it was acknowledged that the president did do ceremonial duties but, where it was powerful, was in the ability to pick who the right person was to speak to external stakeholders dependent on the stakeholder involved – if the topic was clinical or required a veterinary perspective, then you would send the president, if it would be helpful to have a non-professional, for example, for regulation, the right person to send would be the chair. There should be clear role distinctions that recognised subject matter, topics, and stakeholders.

Where the president came from had to recognise what the role was going to be or the competencies required; form had to follow function. There was a question for Council: did it want the president to be a merit-based appointment? That principle needed to be answered. If yes, then competencies and framework could be created before the 'pool' was opened up; that might include RVNs and other professionals because they would have to demonstrate

that they met the competencies, one of which was how they could be a spokesperson for the profession they represented;

- to use the Fellowship as the candidate pool was worrying, because to become a Fellow there was a degree of self-nomination involved. There was also hesitation about splitting the role because a purely ceremonial role appeared frivolous and not as functional as it was currently where there was a system in which one person could do two jobs; furthermore, the College already had a CEO, so there were already two different people. A term of three years was great if you had really good individuals, but there was a risk in that there could also be someone that chaired inappropriately or tried to steer a certain agenda; there was a vulnerability. A later item on the agenda for discussion was around having a veterinary nurse being Chair of Veterinary Nurses Council (VNC); to follow that premise, then equally the chair of RCVS Council should be a vet;
 - o as a CEO, it was a difficult challenge to have a different boss every year in terms of continuity; there was an Officer Team, but it was a sizeable organisation and it had a lot of influence as an organisation – oversight was not the same when there was a different person every year, it was a vulnerability – the CEO had put in place measures such as the vital signs review, key performance indicators (KPIs) etc., to try to mitigate this, but there were not many organisations where the chair was so transient.

Regarding clarity around skill sets and getting the right people for the role, even with a detailed appointment process, there was the possibility of getting the wrong people and there would need to be a process for removal – it would not be a job for three years if that person did not do the job properly.

If the role was split, there had to be serious consideration for extending the presidential term to two, or three, years. However, the 'downside' was that that might mean it was not accessible to all members of the profession because it was a massive time commitment and it would circle back to 20 years ago where the President tended to be retired, which, although they were good, did not always bring the sense of connection to the profession that was so important. Focus should be on the skills and stability required to run an organisation that had a statutory function – if the function was not fulfilled, the College was acting illegally and that was not something the CEO should carry alone;

- [I] supported splitting the role – having been VNC Chair for three years and seeing how quickly a year goes, it was important for governance to have a person in place for a longer period of time. Regarding the use of Fellowship for the role, it would be elitist and non-inclusive for the whole profession and a massive backwards step;
- was it assumed that the President be a member of Council or in the governance structure?
 - o from LCWP discussions, there was the assumption that they would not necessarily be a member of Council;

- from past experience members in role for only one year spent the first three months working out what they were supposed to be doing, six months being effective, and in the last three months playing an end game; there was value in the CEO having someone to talk to in times of difficulty, who had been in post for sufficient time, and vice versa, and that would add quality to what the organisation was doing;
- [I] felt strongly that the roles should be separated; the skill sets were different between chair and presidency and there were few people that had both sets. A chair for three years was important for continuity with working with the CEO. Thereafter, president should be elected against a skill set including central characteristics; elected by the registrants where a shortlist could be produced against those characteristics; for a two-year term; it would be a smaller job, but it would make it more inclusive, and more people would have the opportunity. Currently being president was an all-encompassing year of your life and, if a person was a business owner, then that business would suffer;
 - o whilst agreeing with much of what was stated, there was disagreement about the elected part – the College had spent a lot of time trying to stress to the profession and the public how important it was to have appointed people that were not beholden to registrants; if that was pushed through and the College then said the person that was the significant figurehead of the organisation would be elected by the registrants, all of the good work to date would be undone;
 - o it came back to the opening comments in that the first thing to do would be to define those roles, which in turn would guide the appropriate way to find people;
- be clear on form and function; the chair role should be for three years in order to do the regulatory bit, leaving the president to focus on the rest of the College's work;
- supported separation of the two roles based on the fact that they required such separate skill sets and it was almost too much to ask one person to carry both skill sets into jobs, particularly if the chair was not going to be a veterinary surgeon; if the chair did not know what it was like to stand where a vet stood, then it was important to have someone that *did* understand;
- whilst championing the excellent RVNs and lay people, fundamentally within the profession it was only a veterinary surgeon that had overall overarching care for the animals and that the allied professions acted under direction. Not diminishing the other professions, there was a different skill set in being a vet, different levels of education, and a different level of responsibility, therefore it was quite important for the President to be a veterinary surgeon;
- reflecting on the conversation so far, do not 'close the door' forever, because there could be circumstances where it was appropriate that it was not exclusively vets who could be in a post – just because a lay member had not been President to date, it would be a huge backwards step to limit the role to veterinary surgeons. Regarding elections, the College might not be allowed to keep them to get this work moving forwards; instead there could still be a system of self-nominations, and substitute the elections approach by having different

professional councils as proposed under the governance structure and ensure that they had input into the selection process and a voice in determining who of those self-nominated candidates assumed the role;

- there was a difference between selecting the president from within Council to either having a seat on Council or being there as an observer; if the President was to be a vet there to advise the chair or CEO, then they had to be informed and able to contribute to a high-level discussion, so had to be able to hear all of the discussions;
 - o currently one role did inform the other and it would need to continue;
- did the other regulators elect from their registrants?
 - o no, those that had changed in recent years had been by appointment, and it had also been commented earlier that the College might not have a choice. Some recent examples were forced to make appointments although some did have models mentioned where there were different stakeholder groups that had input in the process as the way of bringing the perspective of the registered population into it; so it was not a vote, but it was a voice – it would be good to explore that because one of the arguments that had been persistently used for shifting the College's governance model was that it was what everyone else was doing.

43. The President drew the conversation to a close and summarised the discussion of the second part of the paper: first and foremost there had to be understanding of what the two roles were going to be; to think about it from the perspective of the organisation, as well as from the perspective of registered groups of people that it had currently and could have in the future; once that was done, some of the other questions would be answered because there would be more clarity.

44. The discussion points were noted.

Review of Charter Case Committee / Charter Case Protocol / 'mini' PIC meetings

45. The Registrar provided an update to Council.

46. When the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) was of the view that a case had a realistic prospect of finding serious professional misconduct (SPMC), but that the public interest could be served in a different way than being referred to the Disciplinary Committee (DC), it was able to refer the case to the Charter Case Committee (CCC). This Committee had the power to issue a public or private warning or, if it wanted to, send the case back to PIC. Four cases had been referred to the CCC: two had received a final determination; one was in the process of being finalised; and one was yet to be decided. There had been one other referral, which had been sent back to PIC and had then progressed to DC.

47. A review of the CCC was scheduled for later in the year to make sure it was being used effectively; that the Charter Case Protocol (CCP) was correct; and, that it had been used to the maximum it could be used.

48. There were no questions, and the updated was noted.

Update to RCVS honours and awards

49. The CEO introduced the paper, noting that it was a pleasure to be able to present honours and awards that reflected the hard work and achievements of members of the professions.

50. The Nominations Committee – mainly the Officer Team plus an additional vet, and a veterinary nurse – considered the nominations every year. This year, it had also decided to have a separate meeting to review the entire process in line with the new strategic plan, to consider whether it wanted to discontinue any awards that might be causing confusion; change anything; or add something.

51. There had been some operational changes proposed and agreed that did not need to be put before Council. There were also four decisions that were before Council:

Rename the Impact Award

52. At the moment there were the Impact Award and the Inspiration Award. The Inspiration Award was supposed to be about somebody's personal impact, for example, for mentoring or culture change; whereas the Impact Award was more for change that could have been on the back of clinical work or research. There had been confusion between the two awards, and that could be seen in the annex to the paper, that showed how some people had been moved from one nomination category to the other.

53. It was therefore suggested that the Impact Award could be renamed to become the Change-maker Award, to make it very clear that it was about specific change either clinical-, or research-based, rather than a person's personal input. A further change recommended was that the award could be won by a team so long as there was a vet or veterinary nurse leading the team – in the past there had been team projects, but the award had been presented to one person, effectively singling them out, which the Committee wanted to avoid.

Collaboration Award

54. The new strategic plan focussed on working better together. Therefore, the Committee wanted to introduce a new award that would be an opportunity to reflect the team-based approach; this would also be open in the future to other allied professionals; and, where it could be more than one organisation or team working together and to showcase how that could be positive.

Reduce number of awards

55. In line with the option of adding the new award, it had been noted that the time required for the awards ceremony part of Royal College Day had been increasing year on year. The proposal was to reduce the number of awards in each category, with the exception of Honorary Associateship as that had really broad scope for potential nominations and was not specific like the other awards so it was important to retain that flexibility.

Nominations Subcommittee

56. It was felt that the composition of the Subcommittee was no longer fit for purpose for the future, as it tended to be role-based: in some years there might be three veterinary practitioners and nobody from research or education; in other years the balance was the other way; or there might only be people from a similar demographic.

57. The Subcommittee suggested a change to the composition to better reflect the awards to be presented and to provide more flexibility and balance. The paper outlined the recommendation, which suggested that the full Officer Team no longer sat on the Subcommittee.

58. Thanks were given to the Subcommittee members as there was a lot of paperwork to consume in order to make suitable judgements every year.

59. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- if the proposal was to separate Nominations Subcommittee from Council, did that mean that Council members and others needed to be barred from either receiving, or nominating, awards, particularly if there was a move to awarding teams – it would be unfair if a whole team be excluded because of one person? If people were to be barred, they should be those making the decision, not the applications;
- o the new composition did include Council just not in the same way: three members of RCVS Council and two members of VNC, plus the Chair of the Mind Matters Taskforce who was generally a Council member; so, there was still concern about the optics of Council giving awards to other Council members and that it would not sit well within the profession. There was the possibility of looking at that situation from the perspective of a team award, but care had to be taken as Council also ratified the awards; Council did have the opportunity to nominate someone for Honorary Associateship;
- once a member left Council, it could be a few years later that they be nominated for an award (with / without a team), so it would be a matter of a slight delay. Could it also be called a 'stronger together' award instead of collaboration award, as that would also link back to the strategic plan?
- 'impact' was cleaner than 'change-maker' – if people misunderstood the differences between the awards, then the guidance should be clarified;
- [I] did not feel that the impact award name was confusing, and that it should stay as it was, and agreed with all other proposals;
- having seen the applications, some people applied for both awards for the same person, which was where the implied confusion arose so clarity would be good;
- regarding composition of Nominations Subcommittee, was it supposed to be the Director of Advancement of the Professions or the Chair of Advancement of the Professions Committee?

- the Subcommittee agreed it should be the Director of Advancement of the Professions – from the staff – because it was about getting the right skill set as there were already a number of Council members proposed.

60. The decisions were taken in turn:

61. Council was asked to approve renaming the Impact Award to the Change-maker Award, to reduce confusion with the Inspiration Award. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	18
Against:	1
Abstain:	1

62. Professor Jones indicated that he had abstained because he proposed a change to the wording but not the name of the award. The suggested new wording outlined at paragraph 8b of the paper would be helpful to delineate from the Inspiration Award but that the name change from Impact Award was not particularly helpful. This was seconded by Mr Wilkinson.

63. It was questioned if the Chair permitted a suggested change to the wording *after* the vote had been taken. This was agreed.

64. Therefore, per the Meeting Rules 2021, the amendment was voted upon prior to the main decision. The amendment was to keep the name Impact Award, but to amend the descriptor as outlined at paragraph 8b in the paper. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	13
Against:	5
Abstain:	1
Did not vote:	1

65. The amendment was carried by a majority vote, which superseded the previous decision and thus was no longer required. The award would remain Impact Award, but using the descriptor proposed for the Change-maker Award.

66. Council was asked to approve the addition of a new Collaboration Award, to reflect the new strategic plan.

67. Mr Wilkinson proposed that the award instead be called the Stronger Together Award. Per the Rules, the proposed amendment was seconded by Mrs Cook and voted upon first by a show of hands:

For:	4
Against:	13
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	3

68. The amendment to change the proposed award name was rejected by a majority vote.

69. Council returned to the original decision to be made: to approve the addition of a new Collaboration Award, to reflect the new strategic plan. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

70. The addition of a Collaboration Award was approved by a unanimous vote.

71. Council was asked to approve the reduction of the number of awards given in each category, to balance the introduction of the new award. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

72. The reduction in the number of awards given was approved by a unanimous vote.

73. Council was asked to approve changing the composition of the Nominations Subcommittee to better reflect the skills required. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	20
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

74. The proposed amendments to the composition of the Subcommittee were approved by a unanimous vote.

RCVS Delegation Scheme 2025

75. The CEO introduced the paper and reminded Council that the purpose of the Delegation Scheme was to bring together all of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the standing committees (statutory committees were handled separately). ToR for subcommittees, working parties, boards, etc., were the responsibility of the 'parent' committee and, for clarity, were all on the College website.

76. Another set of changes would be before Council in the autumn for Audit and Risk Committee as they were out of sync with their changes. Population of the committees for the forthcoming College year was ongoing and would be before Council as soon as possible. Key changes to the Scheme were identified in the paper, for example:

- the vision had been updated in line with the new strategic plan;
- the Chair of VNC might, or might not, become a member of RCVS Council – historically it had been assumed that the Chair, VNC, would join College Council but that did not have to be the case;

- the Chair of VNC would be an RVN, either elected or appointed; again this had previously been assumed and now before Council for discussion;
- amendments to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) to be more specific around purchasing and responsibility for contracting.

77. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- it was good that the working parties, etc., were listed on the website, but some of them did not have a clear description nor who the members were. It would be good to have something that gave people clarity of the opportunities available to members of the professions, and others, to get involved with the College – a ‘feeder route’ – taking for example, the Riding Establishments Subcommittee (RESC); the only person known to [me] was the Chair, which was the current RCVS President; how did the other members get appointed?
 - o for some groups it was an appointment process, for others it was asking people with specific skill sets; more information could be provided for the website;
- how many separate working groups, etc., were there and, from an efficiency perspective, could the College make sure there was no duplication of effort? Furthermore, could Council discuss the inconsistency of Chairs of VNC and RCVS Council – whereas Chair VNC was an RVN, but Chair RCVS Council could be a vet, RVN, or lay member?
 - o the groups were reviewed regularly, and a paper would be before FRC shortly as it was part of its remit to scrutinise new groups – they were not set up just ‘for the sake of it’ as the same staff team had to service all of the groups, so they added to workload. On the second point, in the College’s current governance structure, VNC was actually a standing committee, so it was not a direct comparison; it was about VNC *now*, whereas the discussion related to the President was for the future, and how it would change *future* governance structure;
- there had been discussions about the workload of Council members and people that could potentially become RCVS President, was there any indication of how the workload could be spread more easily amongst members?
 - o that information was not in the document before Council but had been considered; when committee population was discussed; there was a spreadsheet where thought had been given to ensure there were key roles for everyone; no-one had too many roles or too few. There had been a recent situation where only Officers had taken committee chair roles, because no one else had stood for election to the roles, but that was starting to change. Also, now that there was a smaller number of sitting Council members, the College was trying to bring in more external expertise at committee level;

- could vice-chairs of committees be included in pre-Council meetings, etc. It had been discussed a year ago that vice-chairs would be more involved in order to help with succession planning; to date nothing had been offered for Education Committee;
 - o Mrs Cook had been part of the Standards Committee discussions in preparation for becoming Chair in the new College year, but the comment was noted;
- regarding the comment about the situation now, and the potential for the future, the President of the RCVS could be anyone as well; it was because there was the word 'Council' in 'VN Council' that made it read as though there were two different standards;
 - o there was some rationale in that, at the moment, VNC only dealt with business related to veterinary nurses, whereas RCVS Council dealt with a whole range of things related to vets, VNs and any other profession that might come its way; VNC just happened to be called Council because of the leadership role for the VN profession – the asymmetry was noted, but it might appear odd should a vet take over the role, and it had been evolutionary as the (then) committee did used to be chaired by a vet – the College was in a temporary situation until there was more clarity on the individual Councils proposed for new legislation;
- the points had been made that for President and Council there was a skill set involved and not limited to one criteria only; the same argument could be made for the Chair of VNC and that it should be open to others besides veterinary nurses.

78. Council was asked to approve the amended Scheme as outlined at Annex A to the paper, or suggest further amendments, as appropriate – if further amendments were significant, they would go back to the relevant committee for discussion. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	18
Against:	2
Abstain:	0

79. The amended Scheme was approved by a majority vote.

Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 offences – update

80. The Registrar introduced the paper and highlighted:

- no prosecutions had gone to court during the review period;
- 36 reports had been made to the College, the majority of which had been closed.

81. It was noted that when the process was introduced, it was always envisaged that there would not be many prosecutions, primarily because the College did not have any statutory power to investigate. It was clarified that, at paragraph 8 of the paper, where it had been reported that two cases were subject to RCVS investigation, the word 'investigation' meant that the College had asked for clarity regarding information received from the people that had made the complaint.

82. There were no comments or questions, and the update was noted.

Reports of standing committees – to note

Advancement of the Professions Committee

83. There were no comments or questions raised.

Audit and Risk Committee

84. There were no comments or questions raised.

Education Committee

85. The Chair, Education Committee, reminded Council that it had agreed, in principle, to allow the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) 'vet track scheme' to continue until 12-months prior to the College ceasing to recognise qualifications from European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)-accredited universities in 2029.

86. By way of background, Council was reminded that, at present, vets with qualifications from EAEVE-accredited universities could only register as MRCVS if their English language capability was International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level 7. With a view to addressing workforce shortages, the FSA operated the 'vet track scheme' which allowed vets from EAEVE-accredited schools and at least IELTS level 5 to enter on a skilled worker visa to deliver meat hygiene controls. Whilst part of the scheme, the overseas vets received support and study to achieve IELTS level 7 which then allowed them to register as MRCVS, therefore enabling them to train as Novice Official Veterinarians (NOVs) with a view to becoming fully qualified Official Veterinarians (OVs).

87. It was brought to Council's attention that the College had yet to decide upon the exact date of removal of recognition for gradates of EAEVE-accredited programmes, and that discussions had taken place around the in-principle agreement that, should someone join the Scheme within the 12-months prior to the stopping of recognition of EAEVE-accredited veterinary surgeons, they would not end up on a 'cliff edge' where they were no longer able to carry on to become an NOV / OV.

88. Council noted the comment.

Finance and Resources Committee

89. There were no comments or questions raised.

Registration Committee

90. There were no comments or questions raised.

Standards Committee

91. There were no comments or questions raised.

Veterinary Nurses Council

92. There were no comments or questions raised.

PIC / DC Liaison Committee

93. There were no comments or questions raised.

Reports of statutory committees – to note

Preliminary Investigation Committee

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

RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

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

Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee

Mr Hutchinson declared an interest regarding one of the disciplinary hearings listed and would not take part in any discussion pertaining to it.

96. It was commented that there had been a previous question raised about the resolution of cases from the old system versus the new system. Data showed 91% of cases met the new KPI of six months at Stage 1 (S1PIC) of the process, whereas on the old system over 90% of cases met the KPI of four months; clarity was sought why it was thought the new system was better when it appeared to take longer. Furthermore, if the current system was applied to historical cases, what would the median times be with regards closure of cases – a comparison between systems using each data set against them – because it did not appear to be serving the public or the members of the profession with concerns raised against them. It was questioned what PIC / DC Liaison Committee was doing if targets were getting worse.
97. The President (as Chair of PIC / DC Liaison Committee) confirmed that, with the new system and the longer KPI for S1PIC, more work was undertaken at the earlier stage and cases closed earlier. These were cases that, under the old system, would have needed to progress to Stage 2 (S2PIC) and take a lot longer before being closed at that stage. A direct comparison was very difficult because there would be things that were muddled in with S2PIC so the data could not be looked at in simple terms.
98. It was argued that the College could say that there was a higher proportion of cases being closed earlier and then apply the proportion to historic cases.
99. In reply, it was noted that a case was not one single thing and was not about closing them earlier; it was about having done further investigation so that the College could assure itself that good quality decisions were being reached and not taking matters through to a level that would have gone even further when it did not need to. Getting a comparison would require them to be re-done and caution should be advised.

100. The Registrar confirmed that the general data showed that the cases the College received were more complex and required more paperwork to be reviewed and more evidence, and that artificial intelligence (AI) being used by complainants might also be a factor with regards to the amount of information presented that now needed to be scrutinised and the additional time it took. Some of the information received ran into hundreds, if not thousands, of pages. She agreed that a direct comparison was difficult and questioned, in terms of setting the KPI, if there was a purpose of doing what would be a great deal of work to achieve any such comparison. Was there a concern about the current KPI amongst Council members?
101. It was commented that Council should know whether the new system was actually better in terms of resolving cases more appropriately, and rapidly – every day a case was hanging over a member of the profession, many of whom did not have a case to answer, which had a massive well-being impact; furthermore, there was also a client at the end of it waiting and wondering – there should be some pressure to do it well, and slightly quicker to see if standards could be maintained, by tightening the KPIs. It was also important to have the ability to compare systems in a way that a judgement could be made about the contrast for good diligence.
102. It was confirmed that the matter had been considered many times, and that speed was appreciated, however, there was limited time resource – a lot of time could be spent repeatedly going over statistics or it could be spent dealing with cases more quickly; there was a point at which effort had to be put to the new system, into making it work and move cases along as quickly as possible. It was noted that speed was not the only metric, not only had the environment changed since the new system had been put into place, but that the right decisions had to be made. From a team perspective, focus should be on improvements to what it was doing and moving the job forward.
103. In terms of oversight, it was further confirmed that there was an extensive PIC audit that PIC / DC Liaison considered and that it looked at the process, where the KPI had not been met why not, what the factors were – internal or external – and what could the College do to make improvements.
104. There were no other comments or questions, and the report was noted.

Notices of motion

105. The President reported that there had been two notices of motion received:

Motion one – meeting packs / agendas

Proposer: Mr W A S Wilkinson

Seconder: Mrs O D R Cook

“At present, meeting agendas and pre-reading are usually released around seven days prior to meetings although it can be less than this. Many council members have multiple roles and a longer period would give more time for material to be read, contemplated and researched

around prior to discussions. This would act to improve governance by enabling us to have more considered views, acting to reduce risk to the organisation as a consequence.

“This motion could be seen to add burden to RCVS staff regarding getting meeting packs prepared in time especially regarding contributions from external organisations however, apart from a shift in mindset, the level of work involved is the same. External organisations can be told that there is a deadline to submit information by and we need to have the organisational self-respect to stick to such deadlines, so this issue cannot be a problem.

“Whilst this may take a little time to adapt to, it is my belief that it would be a wise move to at least consider this proposal if we are serious about good governance. It is not a question of ‘what is common practice’ and that being enough, but whether the Council feel that this proposal might improve how we operate.

“I propose that Council look into moving to a system where meeting agendas and pre-reading is released a minimum of two full weeks ahead of a meeting except in truly exceptional circumstances.”

106. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- the benefits and advantages in having more time to read papers were noted – of the current pack there were c.600 pages, 100 of which were probably unnecessary to be included in the core reading; the words ‘truly exceptional’ within the motion were the most important. However, it was also noted that the staff within the organisation were working flat out under pressure to deal with a number of critical projects, such as the CMA investigation, and Council had to accept that papers might not be with Council as early as it would like; trying to impose that on the staff team under the CEO would be negligent in terms of the ability of the organisation to deliver statutory functions and the additional work that it was exposed to currently;
- the concept that getting the papers out as early *as possible* was good practice was shared; but also to be aware that the organisation was under a huge strain; [I] sat on four other boards of different organisations and noted that they hardly ever got their papers out two weeks in advance, and Council had to be realistic about what was possible in usual circumstances and what was possible in *unusual* circumstances, which was the position the College found itself in currently. Council had to support the executive to deliver an outrageously high burden in terms of what was on the agenda, part of which was to tolerate that, sometimes, it might have to read things under pressure and best practice versus reality. It was unacceptable to not get papers in sufficient time to read them – which could be debated – but Council had received papers in time to read them, and should support a pragmatic approach;
- the sentiment behind the motion was understood but would not make a difference to when [I] read the papers – there should be a balance inasmuch as they should be contemporary, with the latest information; there was a danger that by getting them out earlier would then drive the need for updates. There could be a slight reorganisation of

the pack to have the main 'meat' that Council really needed, with side papers to it, so it was easier to digest;

- Council was thanked for its support. It was suggested that that topic could be added to the reformed Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) to consider the volume of paperwork and how the items that needed to be read could be flagged and items that were for reference for both committee and Council meetings;
- make it a must read / should read / could read split, and include links where possible; it was hard to sift through all of the papers to work out what was important – efficiency and delivery method rather than timeframes – the audit tender paperwork was a good example as the committee had already made a decision that was being recommended to Council, so it was perhaps not necessary to have included all of the tender documents;
- agree with breaking down the essential parts to the papers and convey thanks to the executive – [I] would have liked to have been able to read all of the papers in one day;
- two weeks might make the situation worse – a lot of things could change in two weeks and could be considered short-sighted; a week was satisfactory from a governance perspective. On another point, the paper that was delivered to Council yesterday [I] did not have time to read it because [I] had already downloaded, and read, the pack in advance; when papers were included at the last minute it could be embarrassing if it had not been read;
- [my] preference was to keep the pack together, because when a large number of pages was noted, [I] would start to read earlier; some guidance between optional and required reading would be useful;
- there would never be one way that would work for everybody, and some flexibility was required;
- please make it clear that the motion was not meant to be any denigration of RCVS staff and [I] would like to add my plaudits for the hard work undertaken into producing the packs; it was about considering whether there could be a change to ways of working.

If the packs were produced two weeks in advance, it meant the team had a two-week period before the meeting and if something should be received from the CMA during that time, they would not be worrying about the production of the meeting pack. Members of Council could emphasise good governance by being more thorough and not have to rush through reading; it felt like there was picking and choosing when good governance was applied;

- historical provision of Council papers had been considered. When Council (and committee) meetings increased from the three per year to up to eight meetings per year in 2018, a risk had been flagged with keeping the two-week 'window' that had been in place previously; the way of mitigating the risk was to reduce it to the one

week in advance provision, with the expectation that staff would endeavour to get them out as early as possible. Once a committee meeting was scheduled, the staff had to do any of the work required, present the papers, prepare the minutes, and prepare for items going forward to Council – the risk in wanting papers two weeks in advance would be that the papers would not be ready so they would have to be put back to the following Council meeting, which, in turn, would slow down work.

107. The President drew the conversation to a close.
108. Council was asked whether it should move to a system where meeting agendas and pre-reading be released a minimum of two full weeks ahead of a meeting except in truly exceptional circumstances. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	2
Against:	18
Abstain:	0

109. The motion was rejected by a majority vote.

Motion two – Disciplinary Committee (DC) outcomes

Mr Hutchinson declared an interest regarding a recent disciplinary hearing and would not take part in any discussion pertaining to it.

Proposer: Mr W A S Wilkinson

Seconder: Dr S E Bennett

“Whilst I feel that the early stages of the complaints system have their issues and are too fear-inducing, I am concerned that the DC often make decisions which seem very lenient.

“For example, a vet who was caught drug driving given a 20-month driving ban by the courts, and recently judged by the RCVS’ DC as unfit to practice was only given a six-month suspension, leading one of my colleagues to remark ‘so there’s an amount of cocaine we are allowed to take?’. There have been a number of similar decisions over the years where vets are regularly not removed from the register despite being found guilty of disgraceful conduct or serious professional misconduct. Over the years I have noticed that this can involve stealing puppies, falsification of official documents/certification and laboratory reports and, as above, abuse of controlled substances despite the fact that vets are responsible for controlled substances. How do we feel about such cases? How do we think the public feel about such cases?

“Contrast this with other regulators, for example nursing, where being caught cheating in examinations can result in removal from a register, setting a very clear example that professionals have to have to be both trustworthy and competent and this is not just whilst on shift. That healthcare professionals do the right thing- not even if it’s hard but especially when it’s hard, rather than the easy option or just looking out for themselves. If they cannot be

trusted outside work, how can they be trusted within it. That being a professional means that, whilst you are still a fallible human, you have chosen to live by a higher standard.

“There is a balance between being a compassionate regulator – which we really need to get right in the early stages of complaints – and risking being a soft touch with really serious cases. The public need to be able to trust that as a regulator, we are doing our jobs and ensuring they can trust their vets. Vets need to be able to trust that as a regulator, we are protecting the reputation of the profession. There is a real risk, especially in light of the CMA investigation, that we could be viewed as ineffective rather than upholding the standards we espouse.

“I propose that Council direct a new working group to review/audit disciplinary cases – focused on their outcomes and decisions – relative to other regulators in healthcare settings such as nursing, medicine and dentistry, and including meaningful surveying of the veterinary professions to determine as far as reasonably practicable, whether the decisions made at DC level can be considered appropriate, harsh or lenient. This will enable us to demonstrate that we take regulation seriously and expect our veterinary professionals to stand tall in society.”

110. In support of his motion, Mr Wilkinson stated that more information about how the judgements were made would be appreciated, because there might have been factors he was unaware of when reading the decisions – being a veterinary professional came with certain responsibilities – for example, a recent case about misuse of substances should not be tolerated because vets were expected to be responsible for controlled drugs.
111. The Registrar confirmed that the information did go before the PIC / DC Liaison Committee, where it had sight of all of the determinations the Disciplinary Committee made and it was able to ask questions of the various chairs of the hearing involved about those determinations, so there was oversight and accountability. There were also periodical external reviews about determinations as well – the last review was undertaken in 2022, and the next one was due and would be arranged shortly. What Council should keep in mind was what could be the outcome of such a review and / or audit – because of its limited statutory powers, the College did not have an oversight body that could appeal lenient decisions; nor did it have that power itself. The only real outcome would be around learning and training needs, which, whilst valid, was already taken into account in the mechanism the College had in place.
112. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:
 - [I] was uncomfortable discussing the matter as it ‘crossed the line’ about regulatory independence and it could be interpreted by the CMA and government as interfering in an independent process around the disciplinary system; it was exactly the reason why they could say that it was not possible to be a Royal College that regulated because it was not maintaining that independence. The reason for putting it forward as a notice of motion was understood, but [I] wanted to declare that [I] would be abstaining from the vote as Council should not be voting on it.

However, there was a place for an independent review of the validity of decision-making, and it was good practice in regulatory models to provide that; there were frameworks in place that existed and built in the independence required. The sentiment in terms of keeping the College's regulatory model under review and whether the processes were right, or whether there were any flaws, was acceptable but anything more was outside of Council's remit;

- as a Council, it needed to understand that the process was being applied appropriately; the last paragraph of the motion did overstep the boundary of the independent process, but reassurance was sought about the application of the process rather than information about individual cases;
- this should not be how a Board worked; there were systems in place to audit the processes. If [I] had a concern, then [I] would approach the Chair of the committee that had oversight, or the Registrar, to raise them rather than go straight to a motion. The reformed CCWG should consider the working methods of Council as a Board, whether things like motions were appropriate in a modern effective governance structure;
 - o it would be about finding a way where Council members that did not sit on particular committees such as PIC / DC Liaison Committee understood the structure, who they could talk to, and feel heard – it might be that it was being done this way was a consequence of not being obvious enough; this could be considered.

113. The President drew the conversation to a close. It was noted that the motion did have to be voted upon, but that abstention was a valid option.
114. Before Council voted, clarification was sought that the point of Council was to set the rules and that DC enacted / enforced them, but that it could change the rules if it wanted. It was confirmed that if someone raised a legitimate question or concern, the rules could be reviewed and a paper put to Council. It could not, however, be about specific cases, but instead consider things like sanctions and guidance – the framework.
115. Council was asked to direct a new working group to review/audit disciplinary cases – focused on their outcomes and decisions – relative to other regulators in healthcare settings such as nursing, medicine and dentistry, and including meaningful surveying of the veterinary professions to determine as far as reasonably practicable, whether the decisions made at DC level can be considered appropriate, harsh or lenient. A vote was taken by a show of hands:

For:	1
Against:	6
Abstain:	13

116. The motion was rejected by a majority vote.

Questions

117. There had been no questions received.

Election of Chair, Advancement of the Professions Committee (re-run)

118. The President reported that one nomination had been received:

Candidate:	Dr Z J Kennedy
Supporters:	Miss L S Belton Mr T M Hutchinson Dr S Paterson Ms J S M Worthington
Date of first joining Council:	July 2024 (Elected)
Current term due to end:	July 2028

119. The candidate had circulated a letter to Council.
120. It was confirmed that members physically present would use ballot papers that had been tabled, and members joining the meeting remotely would email the Registrar with their vote to maintain confidentiality.
121. It was noted that in order to succeed, a single nomination must receive more than 50% of the vote.
122. As agreed at the March 2024 Council meeting, the candidate voted and left the room prior to Council being asked if it required a private discussion.
123. Council did require a discussion, so guests and non-Council members left the room so Council could meet in closed session.
124. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 2.
125. The Registrar and Director of Operations (DoO) briefly left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees.
126. The candidate returned to the room.
127. The Registrar and DoO returned to the room and Dr Kennedy was congratulated on her successful election as Chair, APC for the forthcoming College year, July 2025 – July 2026.

Mr Castle left the meeting.

Any other College business (unclassified items)

128. There was no other College business to report.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)

129. There were no items raised to add to the College's Risk Register from the open session of the meeting.

Dates of next meetings

130. It was reported that a brief Council meeting to confirm the Officer Team for the College year July 2025 – July 2026 would take place as part of the forthcoming RCVS Day to be held on Friday, 4 July 2025 at One Great George Street, Westminster.

131. Thereafter, the next scheduled meeting of Council was Thursday, 2 October 2025 commencing at 10:00 am with a scheduled end time of 4:00 pm, to be held at the Hardwick Street offices.

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

Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) (confidential)

132. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 3 – 17.

Corporate Risk Register (confidential)

133. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 18 – 38.

2024 Draft Annual Report and financial statements (confidential)

134. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 39 – 46.

Registration and retention fees 2026 – 2028 (confidential)

135. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 47 – 53.

RCVS audit tender process (confidential)

136. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 54 – 57.

Update on major projects (confidential) (taken out of order of the agenda)

137. There were no further updates on major projects that had not already been discussed in the meeting.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) update (confidential)

138. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 58 – 71.

Vital signs (confidential) (held over)

139. It was agreed that this item would be held over to the October 2025 Council meeting.

Recruitment of external members (private & confidential) (taken out of order of the agenda)

140. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 72 – 82.

Legislative reform (confidential) (taken out of order of the agenda)

141. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 83 – 90.

RCVS branding (confidential) (taken out of order of the agenda)

142. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 91 – 107.

Any other College business (confidential items)

Classified appendices from Council or committee meetings (confidential)

143. There were no comments on the classified appendices.

Other business (confidential) (taken out of order of the agenda)

144. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 108.

Official goodbye to Dr Allum

145. As Dr Allum was unable to attend the forthcoming RCVS Day where retiring members were officially due to be thanked for their service to the College, the President presented her with a scroll and gift for her valued contributions to the College business.

Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)

146. There were no items raised from the closed session of the meeting.

147. The meeting was drawn to a close.

Annex A

Retiring members at RCVS Day – main contributions

(Membership is not exhaustive.)

Mrs Susan Howarth: Veterinary Nurses Council appointed July 2023 – July 2025 (two years)

(Retires from RCVS Council only, not Veterinary Nurses Council)

- Veterinary Nurses Council
- Chair, Veterinary Nurse Education Committee
- Education Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Limited Licensure and Reasonable Adjustment Working Party

Mr William Wilkinson: elected June 2022 – July 2025 (three years)

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Examination Appeals Committee
- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee
- Standards Committee
- Council Culture Working Group

Dr Louise Allum: elected July 2021 – July 2025 (four years)

- Advancement of the Professions Committee
- Standards Committee
- Primary Qualifications Subcommittee
- Chair, Mind Matters Initiative Taskforce
- Chair, Public Advisory Group
- Competition and Markets Authority Working Group
- Content Management System Project Board

Ms Judith Worthington: appointed July 2018 – July 2025 (seven years)

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee
- Registration Appeals Committee
- VetGDP and CPD Compliance Subcommittee
- Council Culture Working Group
- IT Project Board

Dr Danny Chambers: elected July 2017 – July 2025 (eight years)

- Education Committee
- Nominations Committee

- Registration Committee
- Specialist Recognition and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee
- Standards Committee
- Certification Subcommittee
- CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee
- Chair, Advanced Practitioner Panel
- Diversity and Inclusion Group
- Environment and Sustainability Working Party
- Mandatory Practice Regulation Working Group
- RCVS Knowledge Trustee

Ms Janice Shardlow: Audit and Risk Committee: appointed July 2017 – July 2025 (eight years)

- Chair, Audit and Risk Committee

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	4 July 2025
Title	1 – 4 July 2025 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the remote decision made 1 – 3 July 2025 and the meeting held on Friday, 4 July 2025 (immediately following AGM).
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix (Confidential)
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 0207 202 0737 / d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

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

¹Classifications 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.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Minutes of the remote decisions held between 1 – 3 July 2025

Members (per College year 2024-2025):

Miss L S Belton (in the Chair)

Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

Professor D C Barrett

Dr S E Bennett

Mr D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Professor M D Jones

Dr Z J Kennedy

Professor C M Loughrey

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

Mr W A S Wilkinson

Ms J S M Worthington

Harper Keele Veterinary School (confidential)

1. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 to 2.

Committee, Subcommittee, Board and Working Party Membership 2025-2026 (confidential)

2. Council was asked to approve the final allocation for committees and other roles. A remote vote was taken:

For:	18
Against:	0
Abstain:	1
Did not vote:	5

3. Allocation for committees and other roles was approved by a majority vote. Changes would be made to the respective web pages following the decision and therefore become publicly available at that time.

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 4 July 2025 at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA

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 A J McLeish

Dr S Paterson

Mr T J Walker

*Mrs K Young

*Denotes absent

In attendance:

Ms C L Paget

Registrar

Ms L Lockett

CEO

Ms C L McCann

Director of Operations (DoO)

Ms J Shardlow

Chair, Audit and Risk Committee

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

- Professor David Barrett
- Dr Abbie Calow
- Professor Christopher Loughrey
- Dr Alice McLeish
- Mrs Kirsty Young
- Dr Christine Middlemiss (Observer)

Declaration of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest related to the meeting to report.

Matter for decision by Council

Appointment of the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2025-2026

3. Council was asked to approve the appointment of the following members of RCVS Council as the Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2025-2026:

President:	Professor Timothy Parkin FRCVS
Vice-President:	Miss Linda Belton MRCVS
Vice-President:	Mr Timothy Hutchinson MRCVS
Treasurer:	Dr Matshidiso (Tshidi) Gardiner MRCVS

4. The Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2025-2026 were approved by a unanimous verbal 'aye'.

Date of next meeting

5. The next public meeting would be held on Thursday, 2 October 2025 from 10:00 am to be held in person at RCVS, 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 4RB.
6. The RCVS Council meeting was drawn to a close.

Subject: RCVS News: RCVS pays tribute to former President Neal King HonFRCVS
Date: 30 July 2025 11:35:04
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Dear all,

Please find below a press release from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), paying tribute to former RCVS President Neal King.

An image of Neal during his time at the RCVS is available to download from the RCVS Flickr site here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rcvs/54688482226/in/album-72157688385786035>

Best wishes,

Abi Judd-English

Media & Publications Officer

T. 020 8148 5561

E. a.judd-english@rcvs.org.uk

RCVS News: RCVS pays tribute to former President Neal King HonFRCVS

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has paid tribute to its former President Neal King HonFRCVS, following his passing last week.

An eminent veterinary surgeon, Mr King was first elected to RCVS Council in 1988 and held roles on most of its committees, before serving as President from 1994-1995.

In addition to the Royal College, he also presided over other organisations such as the British Veterinary Association and the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons, making him one of the first to hold three key offices in the profession.

Mr King first qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 1963, graduating from Bristol University, and went on to have a remarkable career spanning several decades. He started out as a general cattle and companion animal clinician, before developing a small animal practice, and then going on to become a senior partner at a mixed practice near Bristol.

Among his career highlights was becoming a founding partner of the Golden Valley Veterinary Hospital in 1967, one of the first veterinary hospitals in the country.

During his time as RCVS President, Mr King was instrumental in the relocation of the RCVS headquarters from Belgrave Square to Belgravia House on Horseferry Road. Among his other notable achievements was his role in developing the 1996 Guide to Professional Conduct and his work as Chairman of the Deregulation Working party.

In 2000, he was awarded an honorary Fellowship on the grounds of special eminence in, and services rendered to, veterinary science.

Tim Parkin, President of the RCVS, said: "We are deeply saddened by the passing of Neal King, who made a huge contribution to the RCVS, and the profession as a whole, during the course of his veterinary career.

"Neal showed unwavering dedication and commitment to improving the standards of veterinary care, putting animal welfare at the heart of everything he did. During his tenure as President, he steered the College through complex issues, providing astute leadership and guidance, while always showing diplomacy and compassion. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of working alongside him."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The RCVS is the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses in the UK and sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards, so as to enhance society through improved animal health and welfare.

Abi Judd-English
Media & Publications Officer

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Our Head office is: 1 Hardwick Street, London, EC1R 4RB

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From: [Luke Bishop](#)
To: [Luke Bishop](#)
Cc: [Cheryl Walmsley](#); [Abi Judd-English](#)
Subject: RCVS news: College pays tribute to former RCVS President Bob Moore
Date: 24 September 2025 18:19:55

Dear all,

Please find below a press release paying tribute to former RCVS President Bob Moore who sadly passed away this week.

Best wishes,

Luke Bishop
Media & Publications Manager
T. 020 7202 0784
E. l.bishop@rcvs.org.uk

RCVS news: College pays tribute to former RCVS President Bob Moore

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has paid tribute to former President Bob Moore, who served on its governing Council for 16 years, from 1999 to 2015.

A 1967 graduate of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in Edinburgh, Bob served as President in 2007-8, after previously serving as Treasurer.

Coming from a farming background himself, after graduation Bob went into farm animal practice in Tiverton, Devon, for three years before moving to Kingfisher Veterinary Practice in Somerset, where he became a partner in the business and spent the rest of his professional life.

During his time as an RCVS Council member, he served on many committees, subcommittees and working groups, chairing the Advisory Committee (now Standards Committee) and the Finance and General Purposes Committee (now Finance and Resources Committee). He was also a past President and Treasurer of the British Cattle Veterinary Association.

Professor Tim Parkin, current RCVS President, said: "We are saddened to hear of the passing of Bob Moore and our condolences go out to his family, friends and colleagues.

"As a rural practitioner Bob knew how important the veterinary professions are not only to animal health and welfare, but also to local livelihoods and communities. This is reflected in how he approached his presidential year – making sure our Regional Question Times went to agricultural towns such as Dunblane near Stirling and Yeovil in Somerset, where there were record turn-outs.

"As RCVS President, he also addressed the joint Conference of the Government Veterinary Surgeons and the Association of Government Veterinarians, where he congratulated Official Veterinarians on their role in surveillance and responding to notifiable diseases, as well as food safety and the rural economy.

"As a practitioner he was also keen to help members of the professions understand more about the standards set by the College and some of the most common sources of complaints about professional conduct. To this end, he led the publication of a well-received booklet that aimed to help his peers avoid complaints, with a focus on the importance of good communication with animal owners."

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The RCVS is the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses in the UK and sets, upholds and advances veterinary standards, so as to enhance society

through improved animal health and welfare.

Additional obituaries – links

(BEVA obituary) Mr J Geoff Lane FRCVS:

<https://www.beva.org.uk/News/Latest-News/Details/Geoff-Lane---30-July-2025>

(Vet Times obituary) Professor Maxwell Murray HonFRCVS:

<https://www.vettimes.com/news/vets/wellbeing-at-work/tributes-paid-to-glasgow-legend-vet>

Mr Timothy J King

Notification of Mr King's passing, but no obituary provided.

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	2 October 2025
Title	Operational Plan to end 2027
Classification	Unclassified
Decisions required	To consider the draft Operational Plan and approve for implementation.
Attachments	Annex A – draft Operational Plan 2025-27 Annex B – Strategic Plan 2025-29
Author	Lizzie Lockett, CEO

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications 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.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 operational plan to end 2027

Background

1. Following a detailed process involving internal and external collaboration and engagement, Council approved the RCVS Strategic Plan for 2025-2029 in March: 'Stronger together'. Please find attached at **Annex B**. Since then, Officers, committees and the Senior Team have been asked to propose workstreams to meet the ambitions of the strategy, to form an Operation Plan to take us to the end of 2027. A new plan will be developed during in 2026 to go through to the end of 2029 (there will likely be continuity between the two, although this depends on the outcome of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation and our push for new legislation).
2. The plan attached at **Annex A** is now for consideration by Council so that it can be approved for implementation.
3. The table at Annex A is only a summary of the proposed workstreams. Detailed plans will be developed for those actions that are agreed (some are already underway), which will be approved 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.
4. It is proposed that a table similar to the one shown is then used as a reporting tool for Council, with RAG-rating applied as part of the 'status' box. This is a more granular approach than for the previous operational plan, where actions, often carried out by different teams, were grouped under broader headings. It is hoped that this new format will make it clearer where progress has been made, and if a piece of work is stalling, and also allow us to have a better sense of where resources are being spent. The table also includes more about intended outcomes and impact.
5. As with previous strategy updates, it is proposed that Council receives a report three times a year, in the January, June and September (this year, October) meetings.
6. It is to be noted that there are a lot of projects listed here, which may seem overwhelming, especially given the huge amount of ongoing work in relation to the CMA, new legislation, customer relationship management system, website and branding. However, it is important that we continue to move ahead and continually improve and innovate, for the benefit of animal health and welfare, the public and the professions. Inevitably, due to internal and external factors as yet unanticipated, some of the projects may stall or be delayed, while yet others may drop away altogether, as further research or scoping may prove they are not viable. Meanwhile new activities may arise. However, it is useful to have a structure that will account for the core of our work, and against which any changes can be considered.
7. Audit and Risk Committee will consider any new risks arising from the plan at its next meeting.

Decisions required

8. Feedback on the proposed workstreams is welcomed, and feedback on the planned reporting framework is also sought.

Annex A – draft Operational Plan 2025-2027

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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Annex A: Draft Operational Plan workstreams – last updated 17 September 2025

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	ongoing	ongoing	Communications programme required to help the profession and public gain greater understanding of RCVS recommendations and the outcomes of Defra's different proposals.
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	Defra timeframe TBC	ongoing	
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	Defra timeframe TBC	ongoing	If this becomes a possibility, extensive risk analysis required around wider limited licensure policy (beyond disability related) Also relevant under A2 (use of data)

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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 & able to provide the best service and care possible	Increased CPD and VetGDP compliance of the profession	Dir Ed	Defra timeframe TBC	ongoing	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	Q4 2027	beginning	This is an RCVS-wide piece of work and so most Directors will be involved in delivery. Funding required will emerge once gap-analysis has been carried out
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	Q3 2025	beginning	This is an RCVS wide piece of work and so most Directors will be involved
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	TBC	Not started	This is listed for 2027 with the aim to develop resources and/or training for 2028

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	2026	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	2027	To start Q1 2026	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	Q4 2025	To start	Comms assistance required
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	Q2 2026	To start Q3 2025	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, EMS 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	Q4 2026	To start, as part of CRM Phase 2	

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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)		2027	This will be a by-product of the first VN Vision project. Currently co-designing resources using theory of change
Continue the review of “Under Care”	Finalised code/guidance for “Under Care”	Production of final guidance/code	Registrar/ Head of S&A	Q3 2026	Awaiting completion of research by Vet Compass – will complete spring 2026	
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	Q4 2027	To follow Under Care review – start Q3 2026	
Full review of the Charter Case Committee	Finalised review and any updated guidance documents (if req)	Production of final review paper for Council and updated documents etc	Head of ProfCon/ Registrar	Q4 2025	To begin June 2025	

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	ongoing		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	Q3 2026 finalising strategy Q2 2026 implementation	Started June 2025	
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	Q3 2026	To begin during 2026 in alignment with reviewing scope of practice for veterinary nurses.	The Registration Rules have not been reviewed since 2017 This will involve working with legal on drafting the rules (SW)
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	December 2026	Planning stage	Compiling paper for FRC to set up a small task and finish group.

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	End of 2027	In progress	Funding via the VN team budget. Resource materials developed and in-person events commenced.
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	2025	In progress	Collaborative effort with MMI Taskforce members. Early stage of guide is drafted. To be published autumn this year (2025)
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 Health passport templates by organisations, feedback from VSC and employers, and DCIS survey respondents	D&I in collaboration with Ed & VN teams, & external educators	Nov 2025	In progress	Target to be set around uptake or pilot groups via employers for example. Funding as part of 2025 however may require further support to promote in 26 and 27 if uptake isn't enough for example
Development of EDI Fundamentals course on RCVS Academy	Increased knowledge and awareness of equality legislation, key concepts and good practice	RCVS Academy data – NPS scores, evaluation survey feedback etc.	D&I Manager	June 2026	In progress	A programme of EDI courses will be planned once this foundation level course is established.
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	Oct/Nov 2025	In progress	TBC. Currently included in 2025 resourcing and budget. May require further promotion or support during 2026 depending on uptake, feedback and understanding

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	Oct 2026	Not started	Inc in 2026 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	March 2026	Not started	This will be in collaboration with VN and Education teams.
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	Adoption of framework. Other measures will depend on what emerges from the research to allow us to measure impact	Leadership	July 2026	In progress	Future leadership development provision will be informed by evidence from the research. Budget for 2026 submitted, but depending on research results then this may have to be reviewed in the autumn
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	TBC		May not progress – idea came out of VN Vision project

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	TBC	Early stages	
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	TBC	Early stage	
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	TBC	Not yet started	Decision to be made on future of ViVet brand. No major budget for 2026 included currently. This will need to be added in if we go along this route. Or consider a DF if it's a one off.
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	New D1C by end 2026 Accreditati on standards review due 2028	In progress	
Review scope of practice for veterinary nurses	Veterinary nurses entering the profession are	Curriculum reviews and self-	VNEC/Dir of VN	New DOC/DOS /PBs	Commencing Oct 2025	This work will align with the review of the RCVS VN Registration Rules.

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
	equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to practise safely from day one.	evaluation report analysis. Quality monitoring reports.		approved and implemented Sept 2027		
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	2026	ongoing	
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	2026	ongoing	
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	Implementation 2027 Research 2028	ongoing	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	2026 Winter 2026 (report early 2027)	ongoing	In budget for 2025

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	2026/7	ongoing	In budget for 2025
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	2027		Implementation required one-year lead-in time
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	2026/2027		
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.	Outcome of quality monitoring reports. Stakeholder feedback.	VNEC, VN Exam team	September 2029	In progress	Project will feed into the update of the RCVS Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training along with RCVS Day

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
	Potential reduction in stress amongst students and educators. Confidence in the outcome of assessments.	Qualification success and retention rates.				One Skills & Professional Behaviours.
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	2026		Dependent on vet school engagement
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	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	Ongoing		
Reviewing the Registration Service Standards	Improved service to registrants and clearer information	Reduction in queries timeframes	Head of Reg & Head of Customer Services			

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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Business as usual activities that support this ambition, for reference

- Analyse VetGDP Graduate and Adviser (employer) surveys each year, identify emerging themes and share these with individual vet schools to support their quality improvement of programmes. (Education Dept.).
- Ongoing monitoring of 1CPD and VetGDP data to ensure members are CPD compliant, remaining up to date with knowledge and skills. (Education Dept.)
- Review processes for maintaining the registers and member records to prepare and comply with new requirements
- To identify and prepare for new reporting requirements, and ensure in line with best practice
- To ensure financial systems meet need of new processes
- Develop a nurse prescriber role – research already underway
- Continuing to create / update / refresh Academy content inc Mental Health for Managers, Suicide Awareness, Unconscious Bias, Civility etc MMI, and other Advancement of the Professions projects will continue with showcasing student experience and engagement with students across all the topics to help engender understanding of the upstream regulatory resources and positive interactions with the organisation
- Planned in-person CPD days at Hardwick to bring the above to life supporting A4

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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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	Q1/Q2 2026	Will start Q2 2025	
Full review of PSS	PSS reviewed to ensure it is effective and proportionate	Reviewed standards consulted on and implemented	Registrar/ Head of PSS	Q3 2027	Will start Q1/2 2026 (following mini review)	Will work towards finalising a draft set of new standards by Q4 2025. Then pause the work and revise when Defra and CMA direction of travel is clear – anticipated to revise in Q3 2026
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	Q2 2027	Will start in Q4 2026 after development of PSS core standards	This may change depending on direction of travel from Defra and CMA
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	Q3 2026	Start Q1 2026	Comms assistance required

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	Q3 2026	Start Q1 2026	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 – Ed &Reg	ongoing	ongoing	Ensuring that RCVS is prepared to support remedies is RCVS-wide. Funding/income streams under consideration.
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	December 2026	Planning stage	Need to develop clear, consistent communication strategies and key messaging. Visible campaigns and real-life stories
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	New D1C by 2026		

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	2026/7		To include transparency & pricing, contextualised care etc
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	Implementation 2027 Research 2028		In budget 2025
Enhanced Find a Vet Service	Greater transparency for consumers	User satisfaction with website, completeness of data	IT/Digital, Comms, Registration	Q4 2026		
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	Q3 2026	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	Research need and put pilot in place by end of 2026 subject to research		Will require specialist input – discretionary funding to pilot thereafter in budget

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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 and understand of the process, reduce number of out-of-scope concerns logged	Satisfaction data; number of out-of-scope complaints	Registrar/ Head of ProfCon	Research need and put pilot in place by end of 2026		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	Ongoing	Ongoing	
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	Ongoing	Ongoing	
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	TBC	TBC	This may be addressed via PSS review or may be via CMA Order, TBC
Business as usual activities that support this ambition, for reference						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship will continue to respond to Council requests (see behaviourism / homeopathy etc) as required. Current plans will align with B2 with the series of debates that are being looked at later in the document ('stronger together with society at large') 						

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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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	tbc	VMD scoping the work presently	Started Q3 2025
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 with potential collaboration with RCVSK	Ongoing - evidence gaps identified	Not yet commenced	No known budget implications currently, will update once planning has started
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	Start during Q2 2025	Not yet commenced	Topics include extreme conformation in SA, equine and ethical breeding of farm animals; sustainability considerations of extreme breeding in SA (ie higher numbers of ops, hospitalisations, chronic illness medications), role of animals in society, role of professions in society, role of regulation. No budget for in-person events in 2026 - possible DF

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	Fellowship in collab with BARTA	Ongoing guides, first due to be launched	In progress	Pain relief guide (translation of BARTA Large Animal into SA) started in June; other work to be mapped (see also debates, above)
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Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
		appropriate. ideally official endorsement by professional bodies		at F'ship Day		
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 profession, educational resources, 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)	TBC	Env statement agreed, plan underway	Funding may be required depending on actions agreed
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 (in conjunction with Sustainability / policy)	Ongoing, but Vet Theatre Checklist by end of 2025	In progress	Next steps re UK Healthcare Alliance Against Climate Change (UKHACC) etc not yet mapped or started No known budget implications yet until internal sustainability plans started – resource requested in 2026 budget for pt staff support to sustainability / Fellowship generally
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	Autumn 2025	Launched	
Limited licensure within new Act	Increase number of public health professionals on the Register	Number able via limited licensure route	Head of PIPA	TBC	Ongoing	

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	End 2026	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	End 2026	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	End 2026	Ongoing	
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	Annual	Ongoing	

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	2028	Ongoing	Estimates put in budget each year
Continued engagement with EU through ENQA	Learning from & contributing to international best practice	ENQA accreditation	Ed QI Manager	2027	In progress	
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	2026	In progress	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	Ongoing	Ongoing	Budgeted as part of Exec Office
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	Ongoing but event(s) to take place in 2026.	In progress	Scoping work has started on MMI Vital Transitions events to take place in 2026. Events will focus on the transitions from student to professionals. DF will be needed, this is not included in 2026 budget currently

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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			Relationships take time to build up, this is not a start and finish deliverable, but a longer-term objective
Business as usual activities that support this ambition, for reference						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of opportunities to work on collaborative projects with other agencies on ENQA working groups (Education & VN Depts). • Cross reference EDI activities in A&B with C5 – health passports, RA guides etc • Continuing via the Workforce Action Plan activities to showcase diverse role types for veterinary professionals eg food safety, public health etc when selecting speakers and contributors. • Fellowship will have another One Health focus this year at Fellowship Day, supporting C3 						

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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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	As part of new legislation	Ongoing	Working with Registrar and CEO
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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	Annually	New CRM due to go live in January 2026 subject to Project Board approval	Strategic funding for CRM. Revenue funding for future development. Communications plan around CRM launch and switchover due to start in Q4 2025
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	2026	Currently on track and on budget	FAV website ready to launch pending CRM outcomes. Any appropriate CMA recommendations to be considered/worked on in 2026.
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	Phase 1 – Q3 2025 Phase 2 Q4 2025 Phase 3 Q1 2026	On track for launch end of Q3 2025	Phased approach necessary due to extent of branding across multiple channels, plus competing major projects

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	Q2 2026	Planning underway, and coms audit due to launch in Q4 2025	Will seek feedback from Senior Team and have oversight by Officer Team.
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	Q4 2025	Coms team recommendations approved by Officers and programme planning underway	
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	Q4 2026	Content audit drafted, intranet platform identified, resource being recruited	
Suite of AI assistants delivered and in use	Time saved, greater efficiency	Adoption, estimate of time saved	CDO	Annually		Pilot commenced in Q2 2025
New HR Management system (HRM)/Payroll	Integrated services, greater efficiency and reliability. Production of relevant and timely information for Staff team, RCVS	Time saved, greater efficiency. Managements accounts produced on time and annual accounts before the audit.	CDO, Dir Ops, Dir People	Q4 2026	Initial requirements gathering sessions held during 2025	Expect to set-up PRB in Q4 2025 and appoint firm to create specification and mini-tender in Q1 2026.

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
	Council and committees. To reduce payroll processing time and staff able to access relevant information and documents	Payroll has fewer queries and less manual input.				
Continuous improvement of apps (1CPD, VetGDP etc)	Ongoing enhancement	Phased software releases	CDO	Quarterly /bi-annually		
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	Ongoing but with initial assessment by end of 2026	Starting blocks	
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	Ongoing but first report to FRC Nov 25		
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	Q4 2025	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	Draft to ARC for Q3 2025 Complete Q4 2025	Just started the work.	Will link in with new website/work with comms.

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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	Depends CMA/ VSA – in phases	Initial discussions	Review required to ensure we meet PSA standards, can cope with changes coming in relation to new legislation and, more immediately, to address workload imbalances
Operational Plans prepared	Planning for success	Business as usual plus any planned projects carried out efficiently- less fire fighting	Dir Ops	Q3 2025		
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	Ongoing	In discussion with Investors in Environment ref ongoing sustainability; decision to be made regarding priority of certification for building work	TBC
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	Ongoing		
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	Implementation by end of 2026 with 6 monthly reviews	Further work required to understand what this means, not business critical but needs to be accelerated	Proposed employee rewards will give managers the power to make decisions about their team on the spot and appraise them on a more frequent basis
Review the RCVS Service Charter	Ensures it meets current expectations	Staff delivering services in line with the charter	Head of Customer Services	End of 2026	To be started	Last updated 10 years ago, needs review in light of CMA work

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
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 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	Unknown yet – waiting Govt, likely to be April 2026	Initial stages	Already discussing day-one rights and probationary periods. There is much more to come on this change in the legislation, but we are preparing in advance as much as we can
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	Key deliverables should be actioned by end of 2025	Survey actions need to be communicated, and new performance documentation needs to be in place so there is some urgency	If we are asking employees for feedback, then we need to show there has been action.
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	Ongoing – annual check in to assess status	Work is ever changing so we need to keep alert to this	Much of this will be based on the Government's plans with the legal framework and any internal plans subject to the organisations set up.
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	Initial assessment at end of 2025 – twice yearly review	The building is being used with little concern	

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
To provide an inclusive and accessible workspace	No staff or visitors feel excluded from accessing H Street	Very few complaints	Facilities Team			
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		Phase 1 – Q4 2025 Phase 2 – Q2 2026	Ongoing and on track	Flexibility has been built into these plans to allow for changes to be made over subsequent years
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	Ongoing		
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	Ongoing		
Ongoing research projects including longitudinal study	Gather data to inform policy making	Response rates to data, usable data	Head of PP&I & Research Manager	Ongoing		Some budget included, but may require DF
Review and enhance process for legal horizon scanning / cascading	Ensure no surprises ref new legal requirements	Process is implemented	Registrar/ DoLS	Q2 2026	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)	Q4 2025		

Key deliverables	Desired impact	Measured by	Lead	Due by	Status	Comment/funding source
<p>Feedback protocol in place for all ST members along with standardised formats for colleagues giving feedback both internally and in recruitment activity</p> <p>New My Progress process rolled out to give quicker feedback</p>	<p>ST understand impact in teams and have plan to address development. Employees feel comfortable to provide feedback, unsuccessful candidates tell positive stories</p>	<p>Reduced developmental areas for ST</p> <p>Reduced internal conflict between employees</p> <p>Positive feedback through external sites such as Glassdoor</p>	<p>People Director and Talent Acquisition Manager</p>	<p>End of 2025</p>	<p>Initial stages but requires fast tracking</p>	<p>Any feedback will be a cultural change for RCVS and will need careful communications, training and ST support</p>
Business as usual activities that support this ambition, for reference						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing collaborations with RCVS Knowledge (ref D7) • Learning through collaboration with our global colleagues (see section C) 						



**Stronger together,
with animal health and
welfare at our heart**



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



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- C** Stronger together with society at large
- D** Stronger together with our staff team and governance



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029

Introduction

Welcome to our new Strategic Plan – stronger together with you.

As the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), we work to inspire confidence in veterinary care. We protect the public interest by ensuring animal health and welfare, and public health, are advanced through thriving world-class veterinary professions.

Many share an interest in this outcome, and it works best when we bring people together to achieve it.

To that end, the focus of our new Strategic Plan is 'stronger together' and, on the following pages, we set out what we aim to achieve over the next five years, working with our four key stakeholder groups.

If you are reading this strategy – whether you are a member of the public, a member of the veterinary team, a student, from within an organisation, government, media, or educational establishment, or part of the RCVS team or governance structure – you hold a stake in veterinary standards and animal health and welfare. So, you have a part to play.



RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2029



The main purpose of the RCVS is statutory regulation. Alongside our statutory functions, we have an important role in helping vets and vet nurses to be the best that they can be.

This means that, as a royal college that regulates, we are uniquely placed to bring people together in support of our common purpose in a collaborative, proactive way: producing professionals fit to practise, and professions fit for purpose.

Our collaboration can be small and meaningful, around a particular veterinary standard, or global and existential, such as on important One Health topics that aim to improve the health of people, animals and the environment. Whatever form it takes, it is all valuable and valued.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the development of this plan. Please continue to help us meet our ambitions, for the benefit of animal health and welfare, and public health.

As our founders put it: *vis unita fortior* – we are stronger together.





RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029

About us

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is an independent body established by Royal Charter in 1844.

We regulate the veterinary professions in the UK by setting, upholding and advancing veterinary standards, and support veterinary professionals to be the best that they can be.

In short, we work to inspire confidence in veterinary care.

We do this in the public interest. This means we support the needs of consumers of veterinary services, including those who keep, own or rely on animals, and, via public health, society at large.

Although our statutory role is UK-focused, we have a strong global footprint in terms of members working overseas, and international veterinary professionals working in the UK. This gives us international reach, which is important as many of the issues we face – such as diseases, artificial intelligence and societal change – know no borders.



RCVS Strategic Plan

2025 to 2029



What this means for you

Our mission is to protect the public interest by ensuring animal health and welfare, and public health, are advanced through thriving world-class veterinary professions.

How we get there

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

What we do

To fulfil our role, we:

- accredit veterinary and veterinary nursing degree courses and training programmes,
- maintain a register of vets and vet nurses who are qualified to practise,
- set and uphold standards of good professional conduct,
- provide a framework through which vets and vet nurses can develop and thrive,
- help our world-class veterinary professionals be confident in the care they provide,
- award Fellowships, Certificates and Specialist and Advanced Practitioner statuses, and
- share knowledge, embrace innovation and support better ways of working.

What we don't do

There are some important roles that are the responsibility of other organisations.

For example, we don't:

- represent the interests of veterinary professionals,
- insure or legally defend vets and vet nurses, or
- provide animal healthcare advice.

Find out more

You can read more about our role and responsibilities at www.rcvs.org.uk/aboutrcvs



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



Our Values

Compassion.

Collaboration.

Clarity.

Courage.

We have updated our values since our last strategic plan, which now include 'Collaboration' to support our strategic aim of being 'stronger together'.

Importantly, we now thread our previous value of 'Inclusion and diversity' through all of our work in a more integrated fashion, reflecting the way we approach equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).



Compassion. Collaboration. Clarity. Courage.

Compassion

We will be thoughtful, respectful, listening and understanding. We will also support our teams, so they have the space, energy and time to respond compassionately.

Collaboration

We will work with stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes and hold space to debate what matters. We will be curious about a diverse range of perspectives and seek to understand all points of view.

Clarity

We will seek simplicity, be clear and consistent. We will be straight-talking, and aim to manage expectations about what is possible, acknowledging that outcomes can't always please everyone.

Courage

For the sake of animal health and welfare, public health and veterinary standards, we will be forward-thinking, act with integrity, boldly seek opportunities for appropriate change, and hold the line where we need to, even when that may be challenging.



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029

About this plan

True to our strategic aims, this plan has benefitted from extensive collaboration with, and feedback from, our stakeholder groups, and takes into account findings from surveys and discussion groups.

Structure

Each of the following four sections, focuses on our work with, and anticipated impact on, a different internal or external stakeholder group, namely:

- A. Veterinary professionals**
- B. Animal owners and keepers**
- C. Society at large**
- D. Our staff team and governance**

In each section, you will find our strategic ambitions and some proposed aims. What we actually do over the next five years will also be informed by changes in the world around us, feedback from stakeholders, our resources and the political landscape.



RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2029



But regardless of the specific actions, two clear threads will run throughout our work: **we do the right thing; and we do things right.**

We do the right thing

Animal health and welfare is precious, and the veterinary team are its custodians. Our role is to support them to do the right thing – and in doing so, we must also do the right thing.

We take a leadership role, strive to advance and push for the legal underpinning that we need, via new legislation.

We demonstrate our impact, are risk-informed and relevant. We are fair and expect fairness in return.

We do things right

To support this, we must work effectively and efficiently.

We seek a strong evidence base for decisions, bring our stakeholders with us to ensure we can deliver, and be transparent in our process and decision making.

We must ensure we are on a sound financial footing, with appropriate resources and skills. We constantly learn. We prioritise the protection of our data, while sharing our knowledge.



RCVS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2029



Timeframe

This plan is for a five-year period and will be underpinned by regularly updated operational plans that outline our activities in more detail, with timeframes, impact measurements and resource requirements.

Our staff, committees and working groups will contribute to these plans, to ensure they remain relevant and achievable.

As ever, any major changes emanating from this work will go to consultation with our stakeholders, both professional and public.

Our framework for strategic change will be agile enough to respond to the changing landscape, for example, the outcome of the Competition and Markets Authority investigation (due by end of 2025) and our ongoing push for new veterinary legislation.



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



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.

Our aims will include, but not be limited to:

1. Achieving new veterinary legislation, including team-based veterinary care and practice regulation
2. Improving the way in which we use data to improve monitoring and enforcement of veterinary standards
3. Reviewing the Codes of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance, and how they are understood, complied with and enforced
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
5. Supporting veterinary professionals' appropriate use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies, to optimise positive impact, support growth and mitigate any risks
6. Ensuring our educational standards and career pathways meet the diverse needs of society and the professions
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



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



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.

Our aims will include, but not be limited to:

1. Achieving new legislation that enables us to better meet the needs of users of veterinary services
2. Forging trust between the veterinary professions, the College and animal owners and keepers, and supporting their needs
3. Supporting and informing service users in order to get the best from veterinary professionals, with increased transparency, agency and choice
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
5. Taking regular feedback and working to improve our services and communications to animal owners and keepers



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



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.

Our aims will include, but not be limited to:

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
2. Articulating the contribution of veterinary professionals, and interrogating the evolving rights and responsibilities of professionals in today's society
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
4. Ensuring that veterinary professionals specifically responsible for public health are well supported with robust standards and safeguards
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
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
7. Engaging with the local community around Hardwick Street



RCVS Strategic Plan
2025 to 2029



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.

Our aims will include, but not be limited to:

1. Achieving new legislation that allows for the right skills and structure for effective governance
2. Developing an infrastructure for success, including our new headquarters, and underpinning structures for finance, communications and digital
3. Planning for success and for succession, including a workplace review
4. Empowering our staff team confidently to deliver on the College's purpose, via competency frameworks and clarity of expectation
5. Creating a working culture with sound values and supportive management, and enabling and supporting our teams to live up to those values
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
7. Horizon scanning, and bringing the outside in, via research, collaboration and experience
8. Taking regular feedback across all our areas of work to ensure ongoing quality improvement

**Stronger together,
with animal health and
welfare at our heart**



RCVS Strategic Plan

2025 to 2029

Summary

Meeting	Council
Date	2 October 2025
Title	Active prevention of sexual harassment.
Summary	This paper provides a brief overview of sexual harassment and the RCVS's responsibility to its members to actively prevent it.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Lisa Hall People Director l.hall@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

¹Classifications 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.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Sexual harassment

Overview

1. Sexual harassment (SH) is unlawful. It is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading humiliating, or offensive environment for them whether the perpetrator intended it or not.
2. Changes to the Equality Act 2010 mean that whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the RCVS and as a Council member, the RCVS has a duty to take all reasonable steps to protect members from SH, whilst also ensuring they are not displaying any harassment themselves.
3. It is the RCVS's responsibility to ensure all parties are aware of the organisation's legal obligation, highlight some behaviours that are recognised forms of SH and ensure members are clear about the reporting procedure if they observe or are the recipient of any such behaviour.
4. The RCVS believes that as part of its organisational and Council culture, SH is not inevitable and can be prevented through practical measures, SH does not always happen in plain sight and can happen in-person, or on-line.

What is SH

5. A range of behaviours recognised to be forms of SH are listed below. This list is not exhaustive. It is important to bear in mind that SH covers a broad spectrum of behaviour, and may not always appear to be overtly sexual in nature, but can include:
 - a. Sexual images displayed or shared e.g. graphic pictures, posters or photos
 - b. Offensive words or comments or jokes
 - c. Demeaning or humiliating behaviour or language
 - d. References to someone's body
 - e. Intrusive questions about someone's private life or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
 - f. Suggestive looks, staring or leering
 - g. Unwanted touching, such as putting a hand on someone's knee, massaging, or hugging them
6. SH can happen to men, women and people of any gender identity or sexual orientation. It can be conducted by anyone of the same sex, a different sex or anyone of any gender identity.
7. The conduct does not need to be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature. It is not necessary for someone to object first before conduct can be described as unwanted and it does not need to be a pattern of behaviour under employment law (although there is a separate criminal legislation the Protection of Harassment Act 1997, which does require a 'course of conduct').

8. The conduct does not have to be specifically targeted at an individual to amount to SH and it is not always obvious, repeated, or continuous, it can be a one-off incident.

Action to prevent SH

9. There is no prescribed way or minimum expectation on what an organisation can do to prevent SH, there are some measures which can be taken to reduce any inappropriate behaviour, they are including but not limited to:
 - a. raising awareness through Council meetings and Council Culture Working Group (CCWG)
 - b. undertaking training
 - c. completing risk assessments
 - d. displaying signage at events so third parties are aware of zero tolerance
10. All Council and committee members have a role to play in the prevention of SH and should not participate, encourage, or condone SH of others or themselves through banter, familiarity or established relationships. All Council and committee members should treat all fellow members, employees and third parties with dignity and respect and think about their own behaviour and whether it might amount to SH.

Procedure for receiving and responding to complaints

11. If Council or committee members witness any SH, it is recommended they speak with the relevant parties in the first instance, this could be the recipient of the SH or the alleged perpetrator. If Council or committee members feel unable to do this, it is recommended they report it to the RCVS President and CEO without delay.
12. If Council or committee members are the recipient of the SH, either by a third party, another Council member or RCVS employee, it is advised they report it to the RCVS President and CEO as soon as possible so that it can be dealt with in a timely and appropriate way. Any allegation made about a Council or committee member will be actioned swiftly to avoid a protracted process.
13. Council or committee members should fully cooperate in any investigation if there is an allegation against them and should take seriously requests to cease or amend behaviour.
14. Support may be available to Council or committee members if they have been a witness to the SH or they themselves have been the recipient of any SH.