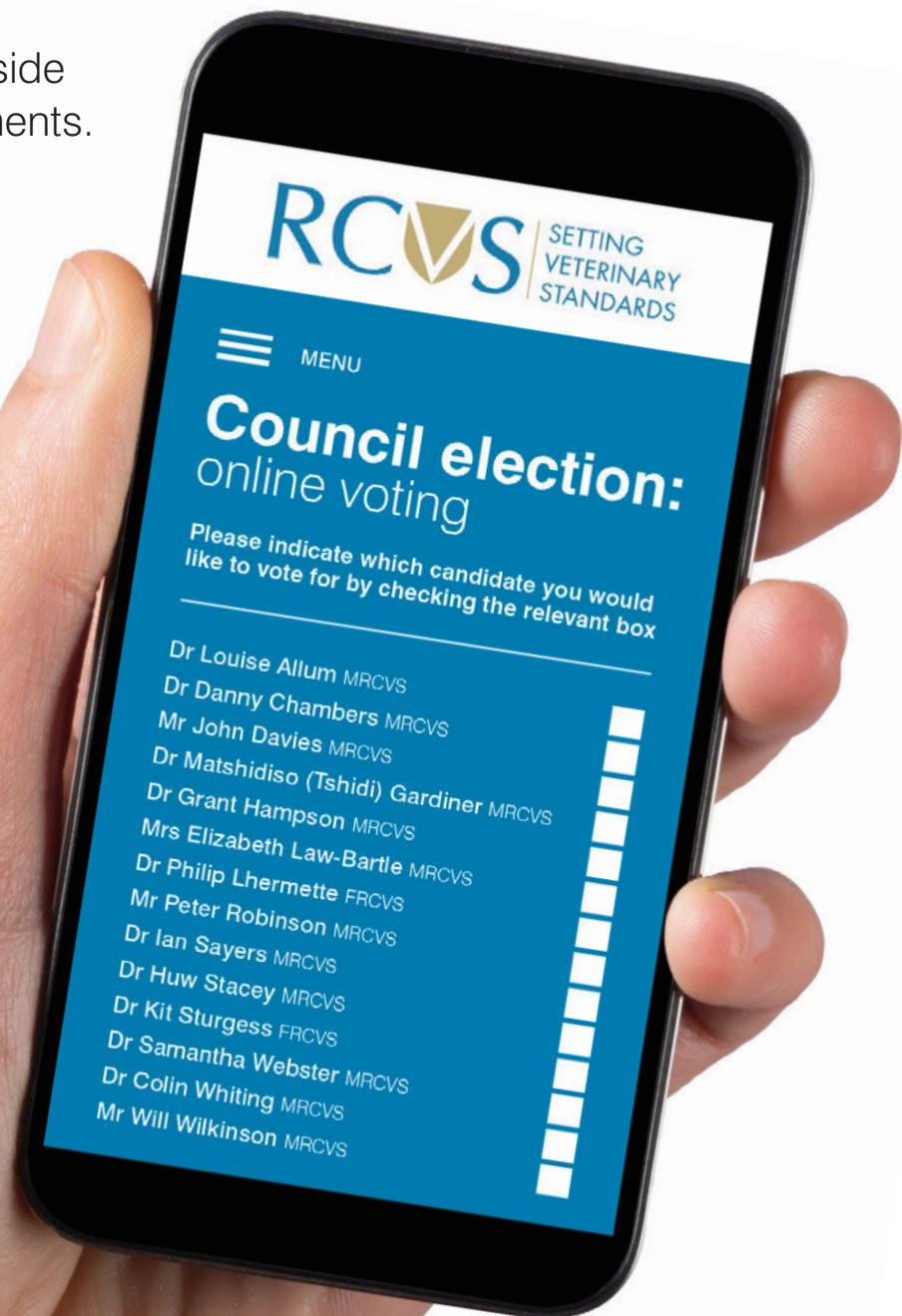




Council election: vote online

- **14 candidates standing in this year's election** – see inside for candidate bios and statements.
- Voting closes at 5pm on **Friday, 23 April 2021.**



RCVS Council election 2021

There are 14 candidates standing in this year's election, including one current Council member eligible for re-election and 13 candidates not currently on Council.

You will find details of each of the candidates, including their biographies and manifesto statements, in this booklet.

How to vote

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the issues that it has caused regarding disruption to the postal service, this year we have gained permission from the Privy Council to temporarily amend our Election Scheme to allow voting to take place entirely online this year. This means that physical ballot papers will not be distributed to veterinary surgeons eligible to vote this year.

The small minority of veterinary surgeons for whom we do not hold an email address will receive a letter with instructions on how to vote online, in addition to their unique code for the voting website.

Voting opens on the **week commencing 15 March** when Civica Election Services (formerly Electoral Reform Services), which runs the election on our behalf, sends emails to all veterinary surgeons eligible to vote with a secure link to a unique voting website.

All votes must be cast by **5pm on Friday, 23 April 2021**.

Please note that, the College's governance arrangements were amended in 2018 meaning that there were changes to the size and composition of Council. While the changes mean that, in most years, there will be 3 elected places available for the candidates, as opposed to 6 in the years prior to the governance changes, **this year there will be 4 available places**. This is to ensure that elected RCVS Council members remain in the majority on RCVS Council.

RCVS Council Election 2021

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Quiz the candidates

As with previous years, we asked members of the profession to submit a question for this year's RCVS Council candidates. Each candidate had the option to choose to produce a short video of themselves answering two of the questions of their choice.

The candidates' videos will be published on their individual profile pages at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetvote21 as well as the RCVS YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos



Dr Louise Allum

BSc MA VetMB PGCert(VetEd) Grad Cert Shelter
Medicine FHEA MRCVS

Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital,
Royal College Street, London NW1 0TU

T 01895 613 841

M 07793 804 308

E lallum@rvc.ac.uk

Tw @LouiseAllumVet

Proposers: Dr Paula Boyden, Dr Nathalie Dowgray

DR LOUISE ALLUM – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I joined as a mature student and graduated from Cambridge University in 1997. My first job was in a small animal /equine practice in Bedfordshire where my house came with chickens. After this I moved to a small animal practice in the suburbs of NW London as I married a South London lad who couldn't cope with the countryside. I then saw my dream job advertised at the RVC primary care teaching hospital and was head vet there for around 6 years. In 2014 I moved sideways into setting up the RVC shelter medicine program and my day to day involves managing my team of vets/nurses and working in our charity partners shelters and hospitals, mainly in central London, but also Huntingdon. I still spend most days doing clinical work (I never get bored of cats spays) and have a particular passion for dentistry.

Outside of my work most of my time is based around my family of 3 teenage children so I can be found on the side-lines of various football matches trying not to get cold. I currently hold two other trustee roles in charities – Dogstrust and my local Baptist church.



DR LOUISE ALLUM – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I have always been interested in applying for the RCVS council and thought it might be a good thing to do when I retired. Now I am thinking 'why not now'! The last year has shown that there is no time like the present.

I am a dynamic and positive person and look forward to change rather than fear it. I have been invited onto two trustee boards already and am aware of the concept of the role and how importance good governance is within an organisation, making sure that decisions are fair and transparent.

At this time, it is important to have people at the RCVS who are in touch with different parts of the profession and I have many links to charity vets as well as primary care practices. During the last year as well as working in charities I have been providing cover at the primary care hospital of the RVC and have seen for myself how physically and mentally challenging this time has been for vets/nurses/support staff as well as our vet students.

I fully support more diversity within the profession being the mother of 3 dual heritage children and having a large African family by my marriage. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement has had a big impact on my family and my husband has been involved in talking to people in his organisation about his experience. I would like our profession to more fully reflect the society we live in. I am also passionate about accessible care and making sure it easier for our veterinary services to be accessed by clients from different backgrounds.

Above all, I would like to continue to support colleagues so that they are able to work in this profession for as many happy years as I have.





Dr Danny Chambers

BVSc MSc MRCVS

Hall Manor, Kelly, Lifton, Devon PL16 0HQ

M 07736 473 702

E danny.chambers@live.com

W www.instagram.com/danny_the_vet

Proposers: Dr Ebony Escalona,
Mr Robin Hargreaves

DR DANNY CHAMBERS – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from Liverpool in 2008 with an intercalated MSc in Infectious Disease Control, which led to me volunteering with One Health projects throughout India and Africa. Implementing a livestock improvement programme in Iraq gave me an even greater appreciation of how the veterinary sector can improve livelihoods worldwide.

I have worked in mixed, equine and small animal practices all over the UK and New Zealand, including the equine departments of the Universities of Edinburgh and Bristol. I currently work in first opinion equine and small animal practice.

I'm a trustee of the mental health charity Vetlife and regularly speak at conferences about mental health in practice.

I've campaigned extensively to promote evidence-based medicine and am a trustee of the Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine charity RCVS Knowledge. I sit on the RCVS Education committee, the Environmental and Sustainability and the Diversity and Inclusion Working Groups.

Outside of work I have hiked the Offa's Dyke route for veterinary charities. I enjoy mountain biking, trail running, and playing the guitar terribly. This Christmas, to give everyone a smile, I co-wrote and directed an online veterinary pantomime to raise money for Vetlife. This was a massive success because I'm hilarious.



DR DANNY CHAMBERS – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

As a general practitioner, a trustee of Vetlife, and co-founder of Veterinary Voices support group which includes 13,500 vets and RVNs, I am well attuned to the mental wellbeing of the profession which has been exacerbated by the pressures of working through this pandemic. Having striven to be a human link between RCVS and our profession, I stepped up to provide immediate clarity and field questions when the RCVS Covid guidance was initially published.

I endeavour to keep mental health at the heart of all Council discussions and believe in transparency in all RCVS communications.

Working conditions, such as clinical support and working hours, are pressing issues facing recent graduates already feeling pressure from increasing client expectations and student debt. I'm delighted to be a member of the RCVS Education committee, implementing improved and more standardised support for recent graduates by replacing the current PDP system with a genuinely effective solution.

Throughout my professional and political career I have campaigned to tackle the multifactorial and socio-economic barriers to equality of opportunity which prevents many talented people from attending university. Furthering this agenda would be of huge benefit to our profession as we struggle with recruitment and retention.

I am excited to be on the new RCVS Environmental and Sustainability working party because I believe our profession is uniquely placed to play a meaningful role in the climate crisis and should demonstrate leadership.

There will undoubtedly be controversial issues to tackle and we need first opinion vets on Council to ensure RCVS totally embodies compassionate regulation. Empathetic leadership is required when facing the extreme uncertainties of the immediate future.

Above all I have demonstrated commitment and effort on behalf of all members of the profession. If you re-elect me, I will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of you.





Mr John Davies

BSc BVSc BTh MRCVS

7 Marlborough Court, Oxford OX2 0QT

M 07584 170 764

E johnrcvscouncil@gmail.com

W www.johndaviesvet.com

Proposers: Dr Lisa Watts, Dr Richard Weston

MR JOHN DAVIES – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Whilst studying chemistry I was offered a place at Liverpool. Before starting, I worked for ICI in Johannesburg to save up. Since graduating in 1992, I've worked in SA, equine and mixed practices. Mainly UK, also Cape Town, Melbourne and Sydney (obtaining dual British/Australian citizenship).

In March 2010 I opened Companion Care Oxford (as employee/director/shareholder). After 14 month's suspension, March 2014 I was dismissed. My shares were valued at minus £276 531 at date of dismissal. An Employment Tribunal later ruled unfair dismissal, wrongful dismissal and no contributory fault. 2012-2015 I was signed off with stress for about 36 months.

In November 2015 my shares were bought by compulsory purchase for £60. Having taken professional valuer advice, I believe they have a substantial positive value. Despite a solicitor's letter, the corporate buyer won't agree to a fresh valuation. Much of my initial motivation for standing for Council began with my experience of corporate practice.

I've a London School of Theology degree, currently studying for a distance MA in LA. My present focus is reconciling the archaeological & DNA evidence for hominids with the biblical account of Adam. I enjoy mountain and road cycling, skiing, underwater hockey, mountaineering and flute playing.



MR JOHN DAVIES – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

Since 2017 I've been standing to promote justice, integrity, accountability, diligence and freedom of speech within the RCVS, thereby the profession. In my view, my attempts to illuminate such areas has been met with obstructiveness, leading to four legal disputes costing the RCVS over £100,000 and me about £20,000. Issues have included censorship of my manifesto (I allege for political reasons), alleged poor investigation of my complaints about RVN misconduct, alleged lack of internal accountability at the RCVS, alleged wasting of MsRCVS money and alleged failure to take mental health issues seriously. (None have in any way related to my professional conduct; I've been in good standing since graduating). The RCVS insist they're above reproach in all these areas.

The recent Legislative Reform Report raises a raft of fresh concerns, especially paras 42-51. Troublingly, the proposed changes **mandate** no imposed sanction for those found guilty of SPM if they're deemed currently fit to practice. Conversely, they potentially condemn the innocent: First, by empowering the RCVS to restrict the right to practice prior to any hearing, based on what might later prove to be unfounded or malicious allegations. Second, by lowering the standard of proof at that hearing. All this is wrong.

Contrast the disenfranchisement of vets with the growing enfranchisement of the corporates—no comment or recommendations in the report. To illustrate, one council member is also a non-executive director of a corporate. Given the possibility of conflicts of interests generally, greater transparency would be appropriate. More concretely, in my valuation dispute with a corporate, I've been advised that it could potentially cost £200, 000 to bring proceedings. Such sums are unaffordable to most vets, but at 0.2% of annual profits, small change to the corporate. So in practice, “justice” is predicated upon financial muscle. Vote JD for ethical governance!





Dr Matshidiso (Tshidi) Gardiner

BSc BVSc Pg Cert Surg MRCVS

2 Gerway Close, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1GL

T 01404 812 944

M 07895 881 291

E tshidi.gardiner@gmail.com

W www.facebook.com/DrTshidiGardiner

Proposers: Mr Nigel Clarke, Dr Max Heard

DR MATSHIDISO (TSHIDI) GARDINER – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

1997 – Completed a BSc (Durban) then graduated with a BVSc from the University of Pretoria in fondly referred to as Onderstepoort in 2003. I have worked in Devon for the past 18 years. I started out working at an equine charity then moved to mixed practice. I locumed as a new mum and then worked as an exclusive OOH emergency vet.

In 2014, I became a partner in a small animal practice. I have worked for corporates and also been a JVP as sole charge and principal veterinary surgeon of the practice for 5 years. During this time, I acquired training practice status, got RCVS PSS accreditation and was a Clinical Coach.

2017 – 2019 I was employed by Duchy College as an OSCE examiner for the FdSc Veterinary Nurse exams. I have guest lectured at Bicton College, Bristol University & Onderstepoort. In 2019, I completed a Pg Cert Surg, Life Coaching Diploma & NLP training.

Currently completing Edward Jenner Leadership Certificate with NHS Academy & RCVS.

Outside work I am a keen biohacker, nutrition and personal development junkie. Currently completing a certificate in Human Nutrition.

Member of BVA, Vet Voices, Vet Mums, BVEDS, Veterinary Women in Leadership, NOMV.



DR MATSHIDISO (TSHIDI) GARDINER – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO**My Background:**

I didn't dream of being a vet as a child – I was drawn to it, it was a calling that I could not ignore. I had no mentors or vets in the family to look up to. But carving a life where I could be instrumental in uplifting human and animal lives alike was a dream life for me.

My Priorities:

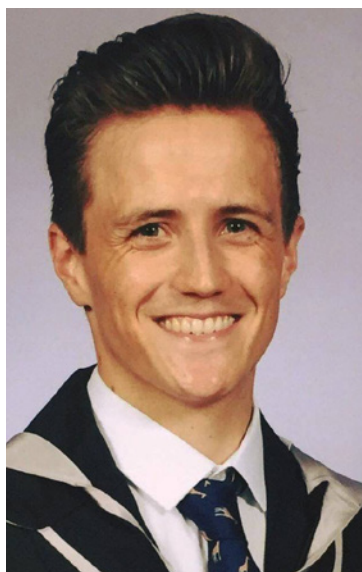
Mental Health & Wellbeing of the Veterinary Profession at large is one of my top priorities. Recently, we have seen first-hand how lengthy investigations can erode one's personal sense of self and cause unfathomable damage. My focus will be to promote inclusive and supportive work environments with a specific emphasis on the Professional Personal Development (PPD) that actively encourages recognising the importance of the veterinary teams mental wellness.

Transformational Leadership goes hand in glove with uplifting the entire team's mental wellbeing. This is a minimum requirement for any leader who wants to breed change in as many ways as possible for the benefit of the whole team. All of the vets end up in a leadership position whether they realise or not. The looming issues facing the profession will need strong leadership to guide us through this next chapter. I am specifically interested in the Work done by the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.

My Promise:

This is definitely not about what I can get out of being on the council but what I can give back to our profession, to you. I will be an outspoken ambassador of the veterinary voice. I am committed to exposing the stress & burnout plaguing our industry. Only we can be instrumental in reducing the brain drain from our profession. I would be honoured to represent you and your ideas. I urge you to vote for your own future.





Dr Grant Hampson

BVetMed MRCVS

M 07455 017 829

E grant.r.hampson@gmail.com

Proposers: Dr Portia Northwood-Smith,
Dr Chelsea Warren

DR GRANT HAMPSON – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 2018 and started my adventure in clinical practice at the PDSA where I had an incredible amount of support from my peers. After 18 months of fast-paced learning, I moved into private practice. During my 12 months in private practice, I realised my passion is for charity work and moved back to the PDSA. I also volunteer for Street Vet, supporting pets of the people experiencing homelessness. My clinical interests involve feline medicine and in January 2020 I began my Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. I hope to designate this in feline medicine.

Outside of work I love being in my garden, planting as many different things as I can. I have always enjoyed cooking and finding a new recipe. During the pandemic I have developed a keenness for baking and am trying to perfect macarons. I'm also partial to a cheesy 90's movie.



DR GRANT HAMPSON – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

Having recently graduated I can offer a fresh perspective to the RCVS council. I have a novel outlook on the journey recent and new graduates are undertaking.

During my time as an undergraduate student, I had extensive involvement in the student council, serving as Welfare Officer and Vice-President. This experience has allowed me to understand how change occurs and how one person's representation can make a profound difference to individuals, as well as more systemic progress and change. During my time on council, I set up multiple mental health initiatives and transformed support available for members of the LGBTQ+ community during their time at university. We successfully broke down stigma surrounding mental health and gave a safe space to those who felt vulnerable.

We are constantly facing new and increasing challenges within the entire veterinary community and I have a passion for ensuring progress and change continues at the same pace.

Over the past 12 months we have all felt new kinds pressures and struggles. I want to help ensure nobody gets lost and ensure that even the quietest voice feels they are heard. I would help guarantee focus on the mental health and wellbeing of all those within the veterinary profession remains the highest priority of the RCVS council.

It is essential we have representation from all demographics within the veterinary profession. Building on the excellent work of Niall Connell and Mandisa Greene on diversity and inclusion, I want to stand as a voice for those who are starting out in their careers and as well as representing those more experienced who look forward to and value, positive change. I feel passionately that the vets of the future need to see themselves represented.





Mrs Elizabeth Law-Bartle

BSc(hons) BVM&S MRCVS

Riverside Veterinary Practice, Cradge Bank,
Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 3AB

T 01775 723 066

M 07734 861 851

E lizlawvet@gmail.com

Proposers: Mrs Julia Creese,
Mrs Catherine Graham

MRS ELIZABETH LAW-BARTLE – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I gained a bachelor's degree in Zoology at Edinburgh University in 2006. During my final year of zoology, I secured my place at Edinburgh to study Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, to start in their first ever graduate entry program where we completed 1st and 2nd years within 1 year. After graduating in 2010, I started working at Riverside Veterinary Practice in Spalding, Lincolnshire, a small animal first opinion practice, where I have remained ever since.

In 2015, I went on a working holiday to Cambodia, which I organised myself. I helped out at a local charity, neutering cats and dogs. I met some lovely people who have become lifelong friends.

I have completed a foundation course in veterinary acupuncture with the ABVA (Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists). In 2017, I completed a GPCert in Western Veterinary Acupuncture and Chronic Pain Management with Improve International and ESVPS. I am a member of ABVA, WVAG (Western Veterinary Acupuncture Group) and BVA. I am also a trained graduate mentor with IVC.

I enjoy travelling in my 1970s VW campervan with my husband and two terriers. We also go running and do Jive dancing.



MRS ELIZABETH LAW-BARTLE – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I was a class representative on Student Council in vet school. I am approachable and good at listening to other people's concerns and conveying them at meetings. Both my personality and life experiences reflect the Nolan principles.

I am extremely passionate about equality in the veterinary workplace. I would like to see more recognition and better pay for RVNS as a profession. I would like to improve retention in the workplace, and aim to make the working environment less stressful. This is important for mental health which is a massive issue and needs addressing. I would especially like to be involved with the Mind Matters Initiative. I would like to see more cohesion between Mind Matters and RCVS complaints. The way complaints are dealt with also needs to be improved. We live in an ever-increasing complaining society. I believe the RCVS are struggling to cope with processing complaints effectively. If we can educate clients earlier on and work with them more closely I believe this will help. I feel that there should be more RCVS representatives on the ground visiting practices in person, interviewing those who are going through a complaint. They may be able to be resolved without the need for a long and stressful disciplinary hearing. I also believe that the defendant should automatically be assigned a personal counsellor who would be impartial. This would give them someone to talk to without judgement while going through the complaints process, due to the huge amount of stress it places vets and nurses under, all while they are having to continue working as normal. The low retention, increase in burnout and high suicide rate are major issues that the veterinary profession currently face. We need to change these things now so we still have functioning veterinary professionals in the future.





Dr Philip Lhermette

BSc(Hons) CBiol FRSB BVetMed FRCVS

Elands Veterinary Clinic, St John's Church, London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2TE

T 01732 452 333

M 07810 377 466

E plhermette@elandsvet.co.uk

Tw @elandsvet

Proposers: Dr Alasdair Hotston Moore,
Dr Elise Robertson

DR PHILIP LHERMETTE – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Philip Lhermette FRCVS completed an honours degree in animal physiology at the University of Nottingham in 1977, and a degree in veterinary medicine at the Royal Veterinary College, London, in 1982. Following four years in mixed practice in Surrey, Philip moved to Kent to establish his own practice near Sevenoaks.

Philip has practised rigid and flexible endoscopy since 1995. He pioneered laparoscopic bitch spays and laser endosurgery in the UK, is author and editor of the BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Endoscopy and Endosurgery, has contributed to numerous other publications and lectures extensively throughout the UK, Europe and Asia. He is on the ISVPS examination committee for the GPCert(Endo) and PGCert (Endo) courses on which he lectures and provides practical tuition. In 2011 Philip received the BSAVA Simon Award for outstanding contributions in the field of veterinary surgery. In 2016 he was awarded Fellowship of the RCVS for meritorious contributions to clinical practice and in 2017 he was awarded Fellowship of the Royal Society of Biology. Philip was Special Lecturer in Veterinary Endoscopy and Endosurgery at The University of Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science 2007 – 2017 and President of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association 2018-2019.



DR PHILIP LHERMETTE – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

So why would anyone want to sit on RCVS Council? As our regulatory body RCVS has enormous influence on the day to day lives of all veterinary surgeons. It is therefore imperative that the knowledge and opinions of vets who work at the coal face are heard and represented when formulating ongoing policy. Veterinary medicine and surgery are in a constant state of flux with new techniques and treatments and improved technology constantly challenging the way we work. Telemedicine, “under your care”, the right to prescribe, schedule 3, regulation of paraprofessionals and the proposed changes in the standard of proof required in disciplinary proceedings are all contentious issues that greatly concern every veterinary surgeon. We are a small profession, often working in small practice bubbles (even more so recently). I started my career in mixed practice for many years before focussing on companion animals and developing my interest in endoscopy. Over the past 20 years I have had the privilege to work with a wide variety of colleagues from all branches of the profession and beyond through my teaching of minimally invasive surgery and my long involvement with BSAVA. I started in the regions as chair of Kent, organising CPD, and worked my way up through publications committee, PetSavers management committee and treasurer to be president in 2018/19. All through this time I have continued to work in first opinion and referral practice so I understand the problems on the front line well and have the perspective to see the wider picture and the experience to know where to go to get things done. RCVS Council is important, it guides our daily lives. It is essential that its members represent the profession effectively, uphold and advance veterinary standards and provide regulation fit for the 21st century. I will do that.





Mr Peter Robinson

BVMS MRCVS

Flat 16, Cleveland Court, Kenilworth Road,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 6JA

T 01926 430 669

E petrobins@yahoo.co.uk

W www.petrobins.co.uk

Proposers: Ms Paula Bentley, Mrs Marleen Weed

MR PETER ROBINSON – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from Glasgow Vet School 1971 and after a period in Veterinary Pathology, I moved into mixed practice in Lincolnshire.

In the early 1980s I bought a traditional, 2-man, farm practice in Warwickshire; over the next 8 years I transformed it into a 3-centre, 5-vet, modern mixed practice with a small animal/equine bias.

We were a VN training practice and I also lectured to SVNs. I was an Agricultural Training Board and Open University tutor.

I sold the practice in 1990 and moved into single-handed, small animal practice in Dubai, where I had to deal with every eventuality as it arose.

Back in UK after 10 years, I worked in mixed, mainly small animal practice until November 2012.

Since then I have been working as a locum in general small animal practice. In that role, I have worked regularly with, and mentored, vet students and new graduates. Since the beginning of 2020 I have also undertaken work as an OV.

I am president of the Warwickshire Veterinary Clinical Club, I represented Warwickshire on BVA Council. I was a member of RCVS Council for 5 months in 2014 and I completed a full 4 year term in July 2019.



MR PETER ROBINSON – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I am saddened that as a profession we have not successfully tackled the fundamental issues that are causing unhappiness, stress and the loss of great people from our industry. I care passionately about the veterinary industry and know we can get it back on track, putting animal health, clients and our people first again.

To do this we need to prioritise:

- Confidence: Preparing our graduates for a much easier transition into life in practice
- Compassionate Regulation: Improving the regulatory system so its effective and compassionate
- Representation: Redressing the balance on RCVS Council, to reflect that 80% of the profession is in first opinion practice

Confidence

Starting in practice is the single most significant cause of stress for graduates and the practices employing them. They come out of a supportive academic environment into a front-line that requires them to be clinically confident on day one. We must create an education framework, enabling graduates to obtain practical proficiency, making them confident, before entering practice.

Compassionate regulation

Our current regulatory system increases fear and stress, particularly in front line vets who are most frequently impacted by the disciplinary process, despite only around 1.8% being Professional Misconduct. Complaints need to be dealt with swiftly, transparently and compassionately. Opening up ownership requires the ability to also regulate practices, to ensure those employed in them have the appropriate protection.

Representation

Over 80% of our members are from general practice, most public concerns are generated by general practice and yet we are represented by only 25% of Council members. First-opinion practice needs to have a strong voice on the RCVS Council. For 40 years I have lived and breathed general practice as a graduate, practice owner, locum and practical mentor to many nurses and vets.





Dr Ian Sayers

BVSc CertZooMed MRCVS

Greenbay Vets, 34 Walnut Road, Torquay,
Devon TQ2 6HS

M 07909 516 802

E southdevonexotics@gmail.com

Proposers: Dr Madonna Livingstone,
Dr Laura Mather

DR IAN SAYERS – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Currently Ian offers an ‘exotic only’ consultancy in Torquay seeing First Opinion Practice (FOP) caseload. Occasional referrals are accepted to help support local veterinarians and improve animal welfare. He is Veterinary Consultant to Shaldon Wildlife Trust (Zoo) and Veterinary Pathology Group Exotics Clinical Consultant.

‘Spare’ time is spent supporting Animals Lebanon – an animal welfare charity where he helps cats and dogs as well as rescue lion and hyena.

He gained his CertZooMed in 2006 and Advanced Practitioner status in 2015. He has lectured nationally and internationally on both ‘exotic’ and small animal topics. He has contributed to various publications, worked with a number of zoological collections and was guest lecturer at Royal Veterinary College 2009 – 2018.

He was a member of the inaugural BVA CPD Group, extending his involvement for a fourth year while it transitioned to Committee status.

Graduating from Liverpool University in 1992 he has worked within FOP, other than a stint of cheetah research in the Serengeti. Initially in mixed practice he has since worked in independent and corporate small animal practices including teaching FOP at University of Bristol (2001 – 2010), where he was an integral part of the UK’s first Rabbit Only Referral Service.



DR IAN SAYERS – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

- In these massively challenging and difficult times, it's a really important time to vote. Even with record voting last year, 74% of the profession didn't. Fortunately we are a self regulating profession – by vets, for vets. Use your vote to benefit the profession.
- Vote for me as an independent voice on Council trying to get RCVS “back to basics” to ensure professional standards are maintained, rather than becoming increasingly political.
- Where is the profession/RCVS heading?
- Does RCVS really need a legal right of entry?
- Why is RCVS admitting graduates as members but limiting employment prospects to practices that have undergone VetGDP training? RCVS has no jurisdiction over where a graduate can be employed. RCVS must review “approved” University courses and ensure improvement in ‘inadequate’ areas.
- RCVS meetings behind closed doors? RCVS must be more transparent – this was supposed to have been remedied years ago.
- RCVS protect the term Registered Veterinary Nurse, via CoPC.
- Reducing level of proof in disciplinary cases will likely increase the number of “guilty” findings – contributing further to stress levels/reduced wellbeing and worsening retention figures.
- Telemedicine, encouraged due to #StaySafe, in my experience can be detrimental to animal welfare. Using telemedicine in my Lebanese charity work illustrates it's no substitute for a physical clinical examination, which Government legislation allows us to do in a COVID responsible manner. Telemedicine must not remain the ‘new normal’. #BeProfessional.
- RCVS potentially enforcing “practice standards” on all. The current system is primarily a box ticking exercise not understood by the general public. It should empower and educate the public as to what it really means for their animals.
- RCVS campaigning for a reviewed Veterinary Surgeons Act. Following BREXIT negotiations it's obvious you don't necessarily get all that you ask for. We must be very careful for what we ask.





Dr Huw Stacey

BVetMed DipAS(CABC) MRCVS

Isambard House, Firefly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH

E hstacey@btinternet.com

Tw [@huwstaceyvet](https://twitter.com/huwstaceyvet)

Proposers: Dr Karlien Heyrman, Dr Orly Simkin

DR HUW STACEY – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

After graduating from The RVC in 2000, I spent 10 years in first opinion practice where I performed a mix of small animal, farm, equine and zoo work. During the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001 I was seconded to MAFF in a TVI role.

After four years, I transitioned into small animal practice, concurrently undertaking a three-year postgraduate diploma in behaviour at the University of Southampton. The many elements of this diverse course included human psychology, welfare, ethics, anthrozoology and law.

In 2011, after a short time in industry, I joined Companion Care. I now hold the position of Director of Clinical Services for the Pets at Home Vet Group, where I support our joint venture partners with clinical and professional matters.

I have previously been a member of the Vet Futures Action Group and BVA Policy Committee, and I am a currently member of the RCVS Knowledge Quality Improvement Advisory Board, the Veterinary Patient Safety forum and the Major Employers Group.

My wife Donna is also a vet, and outside of work we are kept very busy by our two young boys and many animals.



DR HUW STACEY – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

As with other high-achieving professions, the veterinary profession has historically been blighted by a blame culture which has been to the detriment of our members, our patients and our clients. There is a need for cultural change throughout our profession, but this can only take hold when the RCVS truly models a 'just' or 'learning' culture in all of its activities.

Nowhere is there greater need for this than in our disciplinary system. Fear and misunderstanding of the disciplinary arm of the RCVS is still widespread in our profession, and this is not without some justification. In my career I have on multiple occasions witnessed its shortcomings: veterinary professionals experiencing unnecessary distress and anxiety as a direct result of the cumbersome, protracted process that can take months or even years to reach a decision. When finally reached, these outcomes can seem inappropriately heavy-handed or ineffective, in large part due to the inflexibility of the current system.

Elements of the proposed legislative reform have the potential to improve the system to the benefit of all, but it is essential that we ensure these changes do not overstep the mark or create entirely new shortcomings.

Only when professionals feel confident that they will not be disciplined or blamed for genuine mistakes, or failings of the systems within which they work, will we be able to learn from such incidents to the benefit of all. Such a cultural change would offer improved welfare and psychological safety to our members. In addition, it would bring benefits in improving clinical standards, and would help to uphold the reputation of our profession with the public.

If elected, I would be proud to serve you, the members, and would be a strong advocate of a kinder, more empathetic, more just approach to the regulation of our profession.





Dr Kit Sturgess

MA VetMB PhD CertVR CertVC DSAM FRCVS
RCVS Recognised Specialist in Small Animal Medicine
RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Veterinary Cardiology

39 New Forest Drive, Brockenhurst, SO42 7QT

T 01590 623 033

M 07974 017 303

E kit@vetfreedom.com

Proposers: Dr Mariella Miller, Dr Ian Nicholson

DR KIT STURGESS – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I have had an exciting, fulfilling and diverse career spending 6 years in first opinion practice moving from mixed through equine to 100% small animals. During this time I gained my certificate in radiology. Returning to university, I spent the next 10 years teaching and learning at Bristol and the Royal Veterinary College gaining my PhD, certificate in cardiology and diploma in small animal medicine. Following a brief period in industry, I returned to private practice setting up a small animal referral centre that rapidly expanded year on year.

Since 2012 I have spent 60% time in general practice and referral clinics seeing medicine cases looking for that elusive balance between clinical cases, more time to spend with my growing family and following my other interests within the veterinary profession. My particular passion is education and support for general practitioners that I have pursued through roles on RCVS Council, as BSAVA chair of education, mentoring, writing articles, providing CPD and most recently as Editor in Chief of Veterinary Evidence.

Charitable work as a trustee of Cats Protection and chair of trustees of The Wildheart Trust benefits my mental health and wellbeing, gives back and helps improve animal health and welfare.



DR KIT STURGESS – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

The last 12 months have been incredibly tough for everyone. The veterinary profession has risen to the challenge showing its dedication, resilience, innovation and compassion. Having stood in the rain with frozen feet consulting in the car park and trying to communicate well through a mask and steamed up specs whilst keeping myself and the team safe and my patients cared for has really brought this home to me. This year lockdown has highlighted the importance of people's pets and Brexit the critical value of farming and having safe and effective food import and export.

For RCVS to be effective, it needs to support the professions but also has to maintain the confidence of the public and government by safeguarding animal health and welfare. With millions of interactions between with the animal owning public every week, not all will be perfect so we have to have processes in place to manage complaints and conflicts. It is vital that the College is allowed to become a modern, flexible regulator and I strongly support the drive towards upstream regulation with the professions focussed on preventing mistakes and miscommunication as far as is possible. On the rare occasions where this does not happen, I want to drive the continued development of a regulatory system that is compassionate, fair to all, timely and proportionate.

I am uniquely placed to provide a strong, independent voice supporting the profession and promoting the team in all its complexity and diversity. I am passionate and resolute that the profession should be fair, open and inclusive. Embedded in a learning culture supporting its members to be the best they can be. As a member of the RCVS Council, I know that I have the experience, patience, dedication and pragmatism to be effective in promoting these ideals.





Dr Samantha Webster

BVetMed MRCVS

27 Vine Street, Malton, Norton, North Yorkshire
YO17 9JD

M 07761 559 901

E samantha.fraser89@gmail.com

Proposers: Dr Sarah Warren, Dr Adele Williams

DR SAMANTHA WEBSTER – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I graduated from The Royal Veterinary College in 2012.

I started my veterinary career in traditional, rural, mixed practice in North Yorkshire where I spent three years.

In 2015 I made the move from the UK to Australia and transitioned into 100% small animal work in a variety of locum roles whilst travelling the country.

In 2017, I diversified into animal transport, providing certification for and ensuring the health and welfare of all of the pets transported by the largest small animal transport company in the country.

Arriving back to the UK in 2019, I began a telemedicine role as a consulting veterinarian for Jooi Pet Care (Vet-AI). I have since worked my way into a dual role for the company – not only managing the clinical team but also working as part of the Telemedicine Excellence Development team – a department dedicated to gathering and analysing evidence-based medicine in the telemedicine sector so that we can make solid, scientific, informed decisions about an important emerging discipline.

My personal interests include hiking, baking and surfing.



DR SAMANTHA WEBSTER – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

- **Mental health and wellbeing:** the mental health of the veterinary profession is known to be under pressure, and has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Unrealistic expectations from owners, personal-pressure to save every pet and catch every diagnosis, the increasing pressure to provide our services for lower costs alongside more pet owners struggling financially. Add to this the precarious work of balancing animal welfare with human health, and the mental health toll on the profession is immense. The best way we can support the profession is with clear guidance, that supports the decisions that veterinarians are being asked to make.
- **Working parents & work-life balance:** the change in Critical Worker status, combined with the RCVS requirements that vets provide 24/7 emergency care to all pets under their care, has put working parents – who account for a large proportion of our workforce – in a difficult position. Another instance where clear guidance from our governing body would allow us all to have clarity and provide a unified message to owners too.
- **“Under Care”** – having worked abroad I have first-hand experience of how the profession overseas has embraced the clients right to choose and change their care provider. Whilst continuity of care can be beneficial to pets, this is something that needs to be decided by the owner and not by the profession. Clients should be expected to register with a practice under clearly stated terms as to what level of care will be provided, but should also have wider choices regarding how they choose to access veterinary care.
- **Innovation:** digital services are on the rise in the veterinary sector. Significant client demand exists and open discussion among the profession to develop evidence-based grounds for decision making needs to be a priority, which means speeding up the “Under care” review.





Dr Colin Whiting

BVSc CertSAS MRCVS

Advanced Practitioner in Small Animal Surgery

Killaworgey Farm, Black Cross, Newquay,
Cornwall TR8 4LU

T 01637 889 913

M 07971 606 340

E colinwhiting@vetcw.co.uk

W www.vetcw.co.uk

Proposers: Miss Anna Beber,
Professor Clare Rusbridge

DR COLIN WHITING – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

I qualified from Liverpool in 1998, student president the previous year, after a somewhat stuttering academic career much bolstered by support when ‘seeing practice’. Various rejections and disappointments were overcome since being hooked on this career from Herriot books and supportive local practitioners.

Since graduating I’ve worked in clinical practice in Cheshire and Cornwall, except a year back at Liverpool as surgery resident and a year ‘out’ after corporate sale. I’ve been a first opinion and referral practitioner, an assistant, clinical director, partner in a large hospital group; now I work in our own independent travelling surgery business here in Cornwall where my wife Lizzy (also a vet) and our two children have lived for 14 years. I’m currently president of Cornwall Veterinary Association which we’ve expanded to incorporate vet nurses and vet students, and active in various student support networks including establishing VetWings, a virtual EMS site helping 10,000 vet students worldwide. I love being a vet and particularly enjoy client communication, teamworking and mentoring colleagues. My career overview was recently featured in the Vet Record, titled ‘Lucky to have had the support of many people and determined to pass the baton’.



DR COLIN WHITING – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I think we should have practitioners who enjoy being vets and have a sense of pride and community in the profession within our leadership roles, and I would like to help guide our collective future.

In the formation of our future profession I would rather see the dedication and awareness created from 12 weeks with a shovel, a bridle or packing kits and watching consults than 12 A stars. Where that creates difficulty then I want the RCVS to provide accessibility grants to support kids in hardship demonstrating their passion and commitment, and to take full note of caring and employment roles when considering those applications.

I believe it's vital that veterinary workers can achieve incomes that facilitate mortgages, financial security and aspiration. Following Brexit we must become truly world-facing, facilitating and encouraging recruitment worldwide whilst assuring living standards of our members. The public no longer expect that we look or speak anything like James Herriott, but they rightly trust in his principles of community, dedication and care. Those ideals may not fall naturally within the role of a regulator but they will guide any decisions I take.

I've had a lot of fun and enjoyment in my career, as well as some success, and I think that is a strongly positive thing. I've considered standing for council many times before and always shied away from committee rooms and formality. My Dad always said you should take care of all those who rely on you, and that principle holds for family, colleagues and employees, and the wider profession too. At 47 years of age its time I started to be a bit more responsible before I'm too much of an old grey-haired crusty juggler, and if you'll have me, I would love to represent your interests on RCVS council.





Mr Will Wilkinson

BSc(Hons) BVetMed MRCVS

39 Oaken Copse Crescent, Farnborough,
Hampshire GU14 8DS

M 07742 437 266

E willwilkinson2001@hotmail.co.uk

Proposers: Dr Elizabeth Bailey, Dr Kiara Mills

MR WILL WILKINSON – CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY

Training

BSc Bioveterinary Science (Hons) at Liverpool University, graduating 2011
Accelerated BVetMed at RVC, qualifying in 2015

Experience

Worked in small animal general practice for 4.5 years with both independent practices and corporates before moving on to teaching and locum work:
Current employment:

- Teach at Surrey University (Preclinical)
- Teach at Merrist Wood College (Conservation and Sustainability)
- Locum in general practice and OOH
- Manage two smallholdings (sheep, hens, bees)
- Daddy day-care provider :)

Hobbies

Volunteering as a watersports instructor (or did until Covid...)
Camping/bushcraft, wildlife, home-brewing, gardening...

Having been through an RCVS complaint and just about survived, I am convinced that the process is unnecessarily slow given the impact it has on the mental health of those involved. This led friends of mine to encourage me to 'put my money where my mouth is'. As a result, I decided to stand for RCVS Council as an independent and practicing member who understands the realities of clinical work.



MR WILL WILKINSON – CANDIDATE MANIFESTO

I believe in transparency and accountability of decision making. Changes should be based on evidence and necessity rather than speculation. Having spent the last 4 years as a church charity trustee I have experience in committee-based decision making and the Nolan Principles. Some of my views:

- Despite RCVS proposals, the standard of proof for complaints **MUST** remain as ‘beyond reasonable doubt’. People’s careers and lives are on the line.
- The way practices operate affects the standing of the profession as much as the behaviour of individual Members does. We need an effective form of registration, regulation and enforcement to ensure practice owners and management staff are fully accountable to the RCVS. Ideally those owning practices should be MRCVS’ or RVNs.
- Telemedicine should only be between practices and their existing clients. A practice must be able to physically examine the patient if deemed necessary by the clinician. Patients must be examined prior to being admitted to a telemedicine service.
- Where the RCVS has more in reserves than it has identified as necessary, registration fees should be reduced.
- Changes to RCVS structure must be evidence based not ‘because everyone else is doing it’. Bandwagons are inherently dangerous; just because others are jumping off a cliff does not mean that our profession should follow. E.g. we used to be proud to be self-regulating. Council should be elected representatives of the veterinary profession and not contain lay members.
- Complaint investigations/proceedings are unnecessarily long.
- More vets register every year than ever have in the past yet there is a shortage of vets. The issue was never recruitment but retention.
- The RCVS should represent some of the interests of its’ members as an inherent part of defending the reputation of the profession. This includes encouraging prosecution of lay persons infringing on the Veterinary Surgeons Act.





Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons,
Belgravia House,
62–64 Horseferry Road,
London SW1P 2AF
www.rcvs.org.uk