



Royal Veterinary College Student's Union

Council Agenda
Tuesday 19th January 2021
1730hrs

Via Zoom

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| 1. Welcome and apologies | 1730 |
| 2. Confirm minutes of last meeting – All | 1730-1735 |
| 3. RCVS proposed legislature changes (Appendix 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Professor May to address Council with Ben Myring- Questions and comments | 1735 - 1755 |
| 4. SU environmental policy – ON (Appendix 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who should hold us to account? (i.e., external trustee or advisor on Council)- Considerations surrounding transitioning to use of hybrid/electric minibuses: should we set a date for this, and do we need another charging point at HH?- Is there anything missing from the policy that we should include?- Any other general comments from Council | 1755 - 1805 |
| 5. Open letters and student dissatisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There have now been two open letters published and rumours of a College Grove rent strike, as well as continued issues with Proctorio, and upset at international student fee increases. | 1805 - 1820 |

- We must also discuss our position on those students asking for tuition fee and accommodation fee reductions (as separate issues).

6. SU clubs and societies funding – SF (Appendix 3)

1820-1825

7. AOB

Appendix 1 – RCVS proposed legislature changes

Executive summary

(Full report at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/rcvs-legislation-working-party-report-to-council-2020/>)

1. This report presents the findings of the RCVS Legislation Working Party (LWP). The LWP was established in 2017 with a mission to examine the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (VSA), and to make proposals for reform to ensure that the RCVS can be a modern and efficient regulator.
2. The LWP was tasked to establish principles on which any reform would be based, and to ensure that any recommendations were considered in the round to produce a coherent vision. The LWP was specifically tasked with ensuring that consideration was given to a more comprehensive piece of legislation that could incorporate allied paraprofessionals and the regulation of veterinary practices.
3. The LWP consisted of a membership drawn from across RCVS Council, Officer team and staff, including veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and lay members, as well as representation from both the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). Over the course of three years and twelve meetings the LWP explored over 56 reform proposals, from fundamental questions to relatively minor changes.
4. Should council choose to accept them, all the recommendations in the report will be subject to consultation with the professions and the public. Some recommendations do not call for immediate change, but ask that the RCVS be given powers to be able to implement a particular measure in future should detailed proposals be developed and RCVS Council decide to implement them – with (where appropriate), the Secretary of State agreeing via an Order in Council^[1] or other method. This future-proofing would remove the burden of additional Parliamentary time or other burdensome processes being required in future.

Key messages:

The principles of legislative reform

5. The LWP established the following principles on which reform should be based:

Principle 1

Legislation should not be unduly burdensome or complicated; it should provide clarity to the public and enhance public confidence in the professions, e.g. protection of veterinary titles, statutory underpinning for continuing professional development (CPD).

Principle 2

The RCVS disciplinary process should be ‘forward looking’, with public protection at its heart.

Principle 3

That the vet-led team should fall under a single regulatory umbrella.

Principle 4

By default, acts of veterinary surgery should continue to be restricted to veterinary surgeons. However, in order to allow for futureproofing, there should be flexibility to reflect and review the procedures that may be delegated to appropriately qualified and supervised members of the vet-led team. Additional tasks may be delegated where this can be fully justified and evidenced. Such evidence may include comparison with other health professions.

Principle 5

Delegation rights to different paraprofessions should be variable without impacting each other. For instance, the rights of VNs to undertake minor acts of veterinary surgery should be amendable without impacting the rights of farmers as is the situation at present

Key recommendations

Embracing the vet-led team

6. The LWP defined the vet-led team as ‘appropriately-regulated professionals, including veterinary nurses, working under the direction of a veterinary surgeon, to protect animal health and welfare’. The RCVS is proud of its regulation of veterinary nurses, who play an essential part in the vet-led team, and the LWP is keen to allow veterinary nurses to expand their role. The LWP’s recommendations also build on previous work by the RCVS to call for additional paraprofessions to be brought under the RCVS’s umbrella – becoming ‘allied professions’ - to underpin their standards. The LWP proposes the adoption of a model of paraprofessional regulation similar to that of the General Dental Council, allowing the RCVS to regulate all members of the vet-led team, and to create greater evidence-led flexibility over what can be delegated to these allied professionals. The LWP recommends that statutory protection be given to the professional titles of all allied professions regulated by the RCVS, including veterinary nurses.

Assuring practice standards

7. The RCVS Practice Standard Scheme (PSS) has been very successful in promoting high standards within veterinary practice. However, it is a voluntary scheme and as a result there is no mechanism to ensure standards across all practices through assessments. At present the RCVS only regulates individual veterinary surgeons and nurses, unlike modern regulatory regimes such as that recently established for the General Pharmaceutical Council. Nor does the veterinary sector have an equivalent to the Care Quality Commission. The LWP recommends that the RCVS be granted statutory authority to regulate all practices. In order for practice regulation to be meaningful and enforceable across the board the RCVS would need powers of entry similar to those regulators.

Introducing a 'Fitness to Practise' regime

8. The RCVS's existing disciplinary processes do not reflect modern best practice. The LWP recommends introducing a forward-looking 'Fitness to Practise' regime with less focus on past misconduct, instead introducing the concept of 'current impairment'. This model would include the following: introducing a wider range of sanctions, including conditions of practice orders which would restrict practice short of suspension; introducing interim orders to allow vets and RVNs to be restricted from practising whilst cases are investigated where there is a significant risk of harm; introducing; and underpinning the Health and Performance Protocols in legislation. The LWP also recommends reforming the appeal processes so that they become the responsibility of the High Court rather than the Privy Council and introducing the power to require disclosure of information. The LWP further recommends reducing the Disciplinary Quorum to three, with flexibility to use a larger number of Committee members for longer or more complex cases.

Modernising RCVS registration

9. The LWP recommendations include a number of reforms to improve the RCVS's registration processes that are not possible under the VSA. This includes the separation of registration and licence to practise, in line with other regulators, to underpin mandatory CPD and to enable the RCVS to introduce a revalidation regime (as found in other health professions such as the General Medical Council) if this was judged to be appropriate in future.

Improving access to the profession for those with disabilities

10. The LWP recommends the introduction of provisions for limited licensure in specific circumstances where disability would limit the ability to work in all areas of practice.

Retaining a Royal College that regulates

11. The LWP recommends that the RCVS continues to be a 'Royal College that Regulates'. This unique arrangement allows the RCVS to take a holistic approach to public assurance. It also ensures that the Royal College functions are properly funded; some RCVS activities might well not be carried out at all if the RCVS did not take responsibility for them. These includes some Charter-based activities carried out as part of the proactive and supportive approach to regulation such as initiatives in the area of mental health and leadership.

Towards a new Act?

12. Many of the proposed recommendations require primary legislation. The number and scale of proposed changes, and in particular the proposal to embrace paraprofessionals by regulating the whole veterinary team, mean that it is unlikely that the LWP's coherent vision for reform can be achieved in its entirety, or even substantially, via amendments to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. While some recommendations could perhaps be implemented piecemeal via secondary legislation, any combination of these may well be too substantial a reform for this method of legislative change. The RCVS has done the best it can within the limits of the VSA since its creation in 1966, but the process of using creative solutions to mitigate the limitations of the Act, such as the health and performance protocols, may now be nearing its limit. The VSA is in many ways an old-fashioned piece of legislation, overly

restrictive and prescriptive, burdensome rather than principles-based, and unfit to underpin the work of a modern regulator or a modern profession.

^[1] A secondary piece of legislation approved by the Queen on the advice of the Privy Council

Appendix 2 – Draft RVCSU Environmental Strategy

Introduction

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) Student's Union (RVCSU) aims to operate with environmental efficiency, actively seeking to benefit our local environment, including its biodiversity, through our actions. RVCSU will also strive to ensure that its actions are beneficial to the wider global environment, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Background

RVCSU recognises that its members have declared a global climate emergency. RVCSU has committed to becoming carbon neutral in scopes 1 and 2 by 2030¹.

RVCSU recognises its members are students drawn from the RVC and will also strive to ensure the RVC maintains its commitment to environmental sustainability.

Scope of Policy

This policy covers all members of RVCSU, as well as RVCSU staff, volunteers and trustees. The listed parties have a responsibility to acquaint themselves with this policy and follow its principles.

Policy Statement

The main aim of this policy is to ensure that sustainability is a priority for RVCSU. It will also hold RVCSU accountable to its carbon neutral commitment.

This policy is informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The UN SDGs are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all².

Roles & Responsibilities

All members, staff, volunteers and trustees of RVCSU have a responsibility for the overall implementation of this policy. Day-to-day implementation of the policy will be the responsibility of the RVCSU Environment Officer.

Monitoring & Review

Who will hold us to account? Advisor on Council, external trustees...?

The RVCSU will ensure that transparent annual sustainability reports are published online. The Environment Officer will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy at least once annually.

¹ Scope 1 and 2 emissions are direct emission sources from an organisation, including electricity, gas, and fuel emissions from vehicles owned by the organisation. Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions sources from an organisation.

² There are seventeen interconnected SDGs, as follows: 1) No poverty; 2) Zero hunger; 3) Good health and well-being; 4) Quality education; 5) Gender equality; 6) Clean water and sanitation; 7) Affordable and clean energy; 8) Decent work and economic growth; 9) Industry, innovation and infrastructure; 10) Reduced inequalities; 11) Sustainable cities and communities; 12) Responsible consumption and production; 13) Climate action; 14) Life below water; 15) Life on land; 16) Peace, justice and strong institutions; 17) Partnership for the goals.

For more information, visit <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Strategy

As far as possible, subject to resources, financial limitations, and legal powers and duties of the charitable organisation, RVCSU will:

1. Campaigns and Activities

- 1.1 Define its target of carbon neutrality, set checkpoints in time to ensure the organisation is on track, and finally meet our target of carbon neutrality before the set deadline of 2030.
- 1.2 Campaign to ensure the RVC are doing the same, as well as striving to lower their deadline for carbon neutrality.
- 1.3 Embed sustainability within all organisational activities.
- 1.4 Encourage its members and staff to take responsibility for ensuring that the best environmental policy is used and adhered to at all times.

2. Directly Relating to Energy

- 2.1 Strive to reduce its own energy usage in line with its carbon neutrality target.
- 2.2 Support initiatives for community energy projects.
- 2.3 Support energy reduction strategies within the university and student halls.

3. Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 3.1 Consider the impact its activities have on both climate change and biodiversity issues and will endeavour to introduce measures that either mitigate negative outcomes or actively support beneficial outcomes.
- 3.2 Work with the RVC to create biodiverse spaces on campus.
- 3.3 Support local initiatives aimed at climate change and/or biodiversity protection or enhancement.
- 3.4 Meet all relevant environmental legislation and regulations.

4. Relating to the Student Experience

- 4.1 Ensure wherever possible safe walking and cycling routes are available for students to travel to and from both campuses.
- 4.2 Empower students to make their own contributions to environmental sustainability.
- 4.3 Work to reduce waste and plastic usage at SU events e.g., by requesting that stalls at Fresher's Fair do not hand out plastic bags or bottles.
- 4.4 Ensure all RVCSU-branded merchandise is produced with a purpose in mind, made from the most sustainable materials available, and that excess products are disposed of in an appropriate manner e.g., by donating excess t-shirts to charity or for textiles recycling.

5. Relating to Third Party Suppliers

- 5.1 Consider the impact that the goods and services it procures, including the environmental commitment of its suppliers, has on the environment.
- 5.2 Seek to only use contractors and suppliers who have their own environmental policy, which is continually reviewed, updated and measured against recognised, best practice.
- 5.3 Support local businesses, particularly those providing local employment and services.

6. Relating to Waste and Waste Management

- 6.1 Work with the RVC to further reduce single-use waste on campus.
- 6.2 Work with the RVC to improve waste management facilities.

- 6.3 Work with the RVC to improve recycling facilities both in on campus and in student halls, and make it clear what can and cannot be recycled.
- 6.4 Improve the availability of recycling facilities for hard-to-recycle materials.

7. *Embedding Sustainability in the Curriculum*

- 7.1 Advocate for subject-specific sustainability teaching to be embedded in the curriculum across all degree programmes.
- 7.2 Work with the RVC to ensure that sustainability teaching is implemented in a way that is relevant and clear to the students, and that this is regularly reviewed.

8. *Improving Sustainable Travel*

- 8.1 Encourage its staff and members to use the most sustainable travel methods available to them e.g., by highlighting their benefits to physical, mental, environmental and economic wellbeing.
- 8.2 Campaign for improvement of local cycle paths and walking routes.
- 8.3 Campaign for continued improvements to the Hawkshead shuttle bus service based on staff and student feedback.
- 8.4 Aim to reduce the carbon emissions of the RVCSU minibuses by reducing the number of journeys where possible and looking into transitioning to hybrid or fully electric vehicles.
- 8.5 Advocate for staff and students to car-share where use of public transport is not possible.

Appendix 3 – SU clubs and societies funding

During the summer prior to each academic year, SU-funded clubs and societies may submit a grant proposal outlining their planned expenditure and budget for the upcoming year's activities in order to apply for financial support from the Students' Union. A requirement of the grant proposal is that the club or society commits to charging its members a minimum of £5 subs for the year, and fundraising a minimum of £100 outside of subs payments (either raised for the club itself or a to donate to a charity of their choosing). In previous years, if a club or society has failed to meet these two requirements after being awarded a grant from the SU in that academic year, then they are penalised in the grant awarded to them the following year.

Given the unusual circumstances this year has presented us with, and the uncertainty of ongoing restrictions further affecting club and society activities, it's apparent that many clubs and societies aren't spending as much money this year and I have been contacted by a handful of club/society treasurers expressing that they feel it unnecessary to charge their members subs this year given the lack of in-person activities and club/soc expenditure. Additionally, given these exceptional circumstances, I feel it would be unfair of us as an SU to put pressure on our clubs and societies to meet the fundraising requirement this year, especially having seen the amount of work many of the clubs are putting in to boost the spirit of their members and benefit the wider RVC community. I'd like to suggest that we overlook the subs and fundraising requirements for SU funded clubs and societies for this academic year and reassure our clubs & socs that they won't be penalised in their grant awards next year if they do decide not to charge subs or organise fundraising.

~Sam Fenton (VP Treasurer)