

Association of Government Veterinarians

AGM 2021

Wednesday 24th November 2021 18:00

1. Record of Attendees

Kate Richards	Jane Clark	Adrienne Conroy
John Marshall	Jane Gibbens	Liz Kelly
Anthony Ridge	Osiris Ointa	Joana Crisostomo
Mick Park	Levon Stephan	Alan McPhee

2. Meeting Quorum

There was a brief discussion led by Liz Kelly (AGV President) to determine whether the meeting should proceed with 12 attendees including 10 council members. Following input from members, it was concluded that the meeting quorum had been exceeded and the meeting could proceed. It was noted that the ongoing series of HPAI outbreaks may have made attendance difficult for some members.

3. Acceptance of New Members

The following new members, proposed by Jane Clark and seconded by Joana Crisostomo, were accepted unanimously.

Vikki Halliday	Noelia Lopez-Salesansky,
Catherine McCarthy	Bhavisha Patel
Natalie Sampson	

4. Apologies for Absence

Andrew Smeardon	Natalie Sampson
Margaret Woleg	Nigel Gibbens
RA Paul	Arabella White
Katherine Grace	Kate Sharpe

5. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM (November 2020) are posted on the AGV website under 'Council Minutes and Accounts'.

6. Matters Arising

Liz Kelly noted that it was decided at the last AGM that efforts should be made to publicise the AGV and this is an ongoing action.

7. President's Address

As President of AGV and Chairperson, Liz Kelly delivered the President's Address. Liz began by thanking all attendees at the meeting and went on to acknowledge the continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our lives and work. While some members work from home, others are unable to do so including those members working in food safety and abattoirs and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Liz expressed her delight that we were able to have our joint VPHA/AGV conference in September in a hybrid format following on from the first fully virtual conference last year. The excellent hard work of all organisers and Milorad Radakovic in particular, was greatly appreciated and the challenges of delivering a hybrid event were acknowledged. The conference provided an opportunity for veterinary students to learn about the trials, tribulations and successes of Government Vet work. Council member Osiris Ointa delivered a virtual presentation, Liz sat on a panel being questioned by students on the Welfare at Slaughter report and members contributed to some very interesting interactive sessions.

Liz went on to describe the work of AGV Council members with other organisations on behalf of members. As a specialist division of BVA, working with BVA forms the bulk of this – including contributions to a number of consultations, committee and working groups. These included BVA work on responding to Government consultations on welfare in transport, trade issues raised by EFRACom and the RCVS consultation on reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act. AGV worked with BVA on their policy and animal welfare priorities, with thanks to Adrienne Conroy and Jane Gibbens for sharing the workload of representing AGV at BVA Council meetings. AGV Council routinely meets before each BVA Council meeting and reviews the papers in detail. AGV representatives are active in highlighting issues that will affect Government vets and add value to the overall work of BVA Council.

In addition to AGV Council's work with the BVA, council members Osiris and Kate Sharpe are elected members on BVA Council as regional representatives. Kate Sharpe is on the Nominations Committee and Jane Clark is on policy committee. This helps raise the profile of AGV and contribute knowledgeably on matters affecting vets in Government. AGV Council members attend joint officers' (with VPHA) meetings with BVA to explore matters of mutual interest and also participate in specialist divisions meetings, helping to influence BVA's way of working for the benefit of their members who do not work in practice.

Liz described the contributions of the AGV to work being done by RCVS – Liz recently attended a meeting held to discuss extra mural studies for veterinary students and next week, will attend their workforce summit looking at recruitment, retention and return challenges being faced by the veterinary profession. Liz represents AGV members and inputs information and suggestions on work done by vets in Government. Liz remarked on comments made by other participants at the EMS meeting – for example one practising farm vet, who had worked for many years hosting and supporting EMS students in his practice and is a Board member of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons, said that he had learned so much at the meeting about the opportunities for students and vets in Government work and what vets in Government actually did – he just didn't know.

Liz went on to highlight the other notable activities of Council members including Jane Gibbens, on the Bovine TB Partnership and selected by competitive application, working on the eradication programme in England and advising on new policies and



communication. Furthermore, Jane Clark continues with her great work as President of the European Association of State Veterinary Officers and Liz thanked her here her role in maintaining a strong influence for UK Government vets in European matters. Our retiring Council member Amanda Carson was until recently the President of the Sheep Vet Society and of course AGV Council member Kate Richards is President of the RCVS. Liz congratulated Kate on her election.

Liz described attending BVA Congress earlier this month at the London Vet Show. Another of our AGV members, Christine Middlemiss, gave a brilliant talk on the work of Government vets during pandemics and spoke about what she called the ABC year – A for avian influenza, B for Brexit and C for coronavirus. She really didn't want to move any further down the alphabet. During her session, she described the structures and processes in place to help her in her job as UK CVO and that talk had a strong impact on a number of people in the audience – who really hadn't fully understood the breadth, variety and responsibility of the work that Government vets do. The understanding was much higher by the end of the session. Liz reflected on how much she had enjoyed her work as a vet in Government and how the skills she learnt in that work have helped her in current work, both veterinary and non-veterinary, and in other areas.

Liz asked members to continue spreading the value of AGV membership and encouraging colleagues to join our division. One of our recent Council members, Osiris wrote an article on the benefits of AGV membership, seen by his colleagues in Food Standards Scotland and, following its publication, we've been really pleased to welcome new AGV members from FSS.

Liz closed her address by expressing her sincere thanks to all the members who support our division and contribute thoughts and ideas on the work of the AGV.

8. Treasurer's Report

Anthony Ridge delivered the Treasurer's report and began by stating that the AGV is financially healthy with a surplus of £1000 and approximately £15,000 in the bank account. The Treasurer's Statement of Financial Affairs for the period of January 2020–March 2021 is published on the AGV website. The accounts had been examined and certified correct by Arjen Brouwer and Jane Gibbens and the Treasurer expressed his gratitude for their time in doing this. The accounts for 2021-2022 will reflect the financial year.

Currently, there are 69 members including 5 lifetime members AGV. Of the paying membership, 35 are paying the current subscription of £40 (increased from 31 last year) and the remainder are paying between £1 and £25.

So far in 2021 our main expenditure has been the 2021 Membership fee for the European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO) (£302.58). We also provided funding for a Council member (Anthony Ridge) to attend a media training course on behalf of AGV offered at a discounted rate through BVA (£495). Details of the AGV accounts are available here: [- Council Minutes and Accounts \(agv.org.uk\)](https://www.agv.org.uk/-/Council-Minutes-and-Accounts)



The accounts were accepted and Anthony Ridge was thanked for his work during the year.

A general discussion followed initiated by Levon Stephan regarding collection of fees with options including Direct Debit and invoicing to be explored.

9. Secretary's Report

John Marshall delivered a brief Secretary's report and reminded members to continue to encourage colleagues to join AGV. All members are strongly encouraged to engage with and contribute to consultations, such as the recent RCVS legislative review consultation. Lastly, all members were encouraged to check that they are receiving AGV emails.

10. Election of the AGV Council and Council Members

No nominations for Officers and Council members were received. Amanda Carson stood down as a Council Member and was thanked by Liz and all Council members for her contributions to the AGV. Given the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic and as no nominations for JVP were received, it was determined that the current Officer team would stand again for election. Officer posts and Council members were elected *en bloc*, proposed by Levon Stephan and seconded by Alan McPhee. All were elected unanimously without objection.

A discussion followed regarding encouraging members to stand for council. Jane Gibbens highlighted the value of Council membership as a competency example, while Kate Richards reminded members of the value of committee work as CPD for the RCVS. Adrienne raised the point that Levon had previously provided information regarding the value of AGV membership to Human Resources and Levon added that he would like to see more Veterinary Investigation Officers joining AGV. Anthony has spoken with Sean Rowlands (APHA) to see if vets could be encouraged to join. Jane Clark pointed out that, in the Civil Service people survey, there has been no separate Government veterinary profession entry for the past 2 years, and that vets are currently part of Government Science and Engineering.

Officers

President	Liz Kelly
Senior Vice President	Kate Sharpe
Junior Vice President	Mick Park
Secretary	John Marshall
Treasurer	Anthony Ridge

Council Members

Adrienne Conroy	Joana Crisostomo
Katherine Grace	Jane Gibbens
Jane Clark	Osiris Ointa
Kate Richards	

11. European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO)

Jane Clark began by thanking the AGV for support including funding for a recent trip to Brussels for the EASVO General Assembly. Jane thanked the AGV council for valued input to FVE consultations on animal welfare, food safety and sustainability. A copy of Jane's formal back to office report is available on the AGV website at [BVA and FVE/EASVO \(agv.org.uk\)](#). Jane reminded members that further information is available on the EASVO website here: <https://easvo.fve.org/>

Jane attended the EASVO General Assembly on 11th November 2021 in Brussels. This was the first meeting Jane had attended in person for two years; it was a hybrid meeting with some delegates attending virtually, which presents challenges for discussion and networking. The next meeting in June 2022 will be held in London.

Jane thanked the BVA and RCVS for nominating her for the FVE Vice-president position. Although her application was ultimately unsuccessful it demonstrated a commitment to the FVE. The current EASVO Board, with Jane as President, will stand for another 2-year block and therefore Jane asked that AGV considers whether we should pay full membership; Liz added that the financial aspects of membership will be discussed at another meeting.

Jane was thanked for her continued hard work in this area.

12. Any other business

Levon Stephan raised the issue of the duration of the Presidency as AOB. Following discussion by the Council it was determined that the Presidency would continue to typically be one year, but this could be extended to a further year with agreement of Council and normal elections procedures.

13. President's Closing Remarks

Liz began by thanking the AGV members attending the meeting before going on to thank the Officers and Council Members.

14. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will be held **in November 2022**, date to be advised.