



# Association of Government Veterinarians AGM 2022

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 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	Arjen Brouwer
Nigel Gibbens	Noelia Lopez-Salesansky	Arabella White
Claire White		

## **2. Acceptance of New Members**

The following new members were welcomed to the AGV by Liz Kelly.

Claire White  
Giles Paiba

## **3. Apologies for Absence**

Alan McPhee  
Margaret Woleg  
Rob Paul  
Giles Paiba

## **4. Minutes of the last AGM**

The minutes of the last AGM (November 2021) are posted on the AGV website under 'Council Minutes and Accounts'.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **6. AGV Constitution**

Liz Kelly described the proposed amendments to the AGV Constitution. A summary of the changes are as follows:

1. Amendment of the 'Objects of the Association' to reflect the current Mission and Aims of the Association (Sections 3 & 4).
2. Amendment of the Membership of the Association to include all veterinary surgeons providing official veterinary services and veterinary students (Sections 5 & 6).
3. Amendment of the membership application process to reflect the fact that a proposer and seconder is no longer required (Section 7).
4. Amendment of the Council membership to permit non-BVA members to hold Council membership, with the exception of the President and Vice-President (Section 9).
5. Revision of the process for examination of the Accounts (Section 12)



6. Amendment of the Officers to reflect the current office of the President and Vice-President (Section 16).
7. Introduction of descriptions of the roles of President and Vice President (Sections 18 & 19).
8. Amendment of the Account Auditors to the current title of Account Examiners (Section 22).
9. The use of gender-neutral language throughout the constitution.

There was discussion regarding the proposed amendments. Nigel Gibbens commented that student membership is a great idea and asked whether it would be free for students to join. There was some discussion around the student membership offered by similar organisations, the issue of student fees, and recent graduates. It was decided that further consideration of student membership by Council is required. Kate Richards raised the issue of whether Associate members who are not MRCVS need to be eligible for RCVS membership. There was discussion regarding the role of Vice-Presidents and concerns that the proposed descriptions were too specific e.g., conference organisation. Liz Kelly felt that the description was accurate as conference organisation is a major and necessary part of the VP role.

Liz asked if there were any objections to the proposed amendments. There were no objections, and the Amendments were unanimously approved.

## **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 remarked on the fact that this was our third virtual AGM. The virtual format has the advantage of encouraging attendance, while lacking room for catching up with friends and colleagues. Liz acknowledged the pressures of the avian influenza outbreak, challenges in international trade, the cost-of-living crisis, and repeated changes in government ministers and applauded vets in government for their continued hard work.

Liz went on to describe the work of AGV Council on behalf of AGV members. The joint VPHA/AGV conference was again held in September in a hybrid format. The excellent hard work of all organisers and Milorad Radakovic in particular, was greatly appreciated. The organisers successfully delivered a conference that included discussion around the complexity of providing raw and vegan pet food diets and the risks of zoonoses, including salmonella and toxoplasma. Liz described an example from the US of vets in practice requiring pet owners to acknowledge the risks of raw diets and practice barrier nursing. Liz described how she was unfortunately unable to attend the conference due to a holiday postponed by covid.

As a specialist division of BVA, working with BVA forms the bulk of the AGV Council's activities including contributions to a number of consultations, committee and working groups. These included contributions to the BVA's response to welfare labelling, the FSA Ops transformation and on neonatal culling methods. The BVA is receptive to the



comments and concerns of the AGV and typically we reach a mutually agreed position. AGV Council members led by Adrienne Conroy have attended three BVA Council meetings on behalf of AGV, with a fourth planned for December. Liz went on to describe further examples of inputs by the AGV Council to the wider veterinary profession. These included discussions with the RCVS on extra mural studies; Liz previously attended the RCVS summit on EMS and AGV Council members Anthony Ridge and Osiris Ointa have attended the BVA working group on EMS. The BVA Council also discussed the RCVS workforce summit looking at problems with retention, recruitment and return in the veterinary profession. This is a key issue and the AGV was represented at the summit and at BVA Council. AGV continues to engage with the RCVS and BVA on the issues of veterinary recruitment, retention and return. Council member Kate Sharpe will be representing AGV at a RCVS/Defra meeting being held at the end of November addressing these issues with OVs and AGV will contribute to a report due to be published early next year.

AGV Council had concerns at the way the discussion at BVA Council on the workforce summit was reported in the Vet Record and made strong verbal and written representations to BVA officers and their chief executive. Our views were taken on board. We raised another concern with BVA that some of the advertising in the Vet Record conflicted with BVA policies; for example adverts promoting the routine use of parasitocides in small animals were at odds with BVA policy on this. While appreciating that the Vet Record has editorial independence and BVA do not want to change this BVA officers have since refused permission for at least one advert to run. Liz went on to describe other workgroups run by BVA that do not have AGV representation. We can't attend all working groups and so it is important to prioritise those with strong government vet interest, but we have the opportunity to comment on the policy positions coming out of these groups. We have added value to positions on the use and sale of snares and on the facilitation of trade between the EU and GB. Liz described the very useful work the BVA do to support the profession in other areas including sustainability, antimicrobial resistance and improving veterinary workplaces. The BVA priorities areas are reviewed annually and the AGV input to this process, along with the other specialist divisions. We were key in highlighting the need to include international trade issues and that One Health must be present in the priority on sustainability. The BVA has published their priorities for the year ahead including good veterinary workplaces, environmental sustainability, education and widening participation, agriculture and trade post-Brexit, animal welfare and the future of the veterinary profession. Liz went on to discuss BVA Council meetings, acknowledging that BVA members receive the update paper before each Council meetings directly but in future we shall share the update paper before each BVA Council meeting, highlighting points of interest in the covering email, to all AGV members. This is consistent with 4b of our amended constitution 'to present an authoritative opinion on matters affecting vets in government and seeking to ensure that their position takes into account the perspective of government veterinarians'.

Liz went on to describe the work of Jane Gibbens (AVG Council member) on bovine tuberculosis. Jane was a member of the working group which produced the BVA policy



position on BTB. There was some controversy around the effects of culling following a paper published in the Vet Rec in April, aspects of which were challenged both by Defra and by Jane herself in the Record. Jane attended a meeting in September to review BVA's TB Policy position in the light of new evidence, where several papers were considered including the paper in the Vet Record in April by Langton et al that claimed their analysis had shown no effect of badger culling on TB incidence in cattle in the culled areas. Jane contributed to the discussion points which included the analysis assumed that culling would have an effect in the same year as it was implemented and every year thereafter, in contrast to the evidence from culling trials that all show it takes at least 2 years for culling to have an effect; TB controls in the cull areas were substantially wider and included a range of cattle measures as well as badger culling; the data available was not specifically defined by the cull areas which limited the usefulness of the analysis. Jane was further involved in the discussion of another paper in the Journal of Applied Microbiology that looked at frequency of shedding of *M. bovis* in faeces and extrapolated from the low rate found to suggest there was little risk of spreading TB when using slurry as a fertiliser. Jane contributed to the discussion points which included that slurry is sourced from multiple animals over long periods so measuring excretion at a single point in time from a few individuals could not measure the risk from slurry. The BVA TB Policy position is still undergoing review informed by that meeting and other inputs, and a decision over whether to revise it will be made early next year. Liz thanked Jane for her continuing work on this, her knowledge and experience is a key contribution and the BVA appreciate her input very much.

BVA organised other regular discussions, all virtually this year, including a joint officers meeting with AGV and VPHA and a meeting of representatives from all specialist divisions. At the latter meeting Liz was pleased that Malcolm Morley, BVA President, asked AGV to continue to provide them with constructive criticism, it was welcomed and acted on.

Other involvement in BVA meetings by AGV members included Jane Clark and Osiris Ointa's contributions to BVA policy Committee during the year, not as formal representatives of AGV but covering AGV's interests. Jane is also a member of BVA Welsh Branch. Kate Sharpe and Osiris represent regions on BVA Council.

Jane Clark continues her role of EASVO President, working in Europe with EASVO and with FVE. Jane is attending the AGM from Malta where the EASVO meeting is being held and Liz thanked her for continuing to maintain influence for UK government vets in Europe.

Liz went on to describe the contributions of other AGV Council members across the profession. Outside his work for AGV, as Treasurer and web master, Anthony Ridge is involved with Vets stay go diversify and recently chaired a panel session at their second live event including promotion of the One Health role of government vets. Another Council member, Kate Richards, has now moved into the Senior Vice President role at RCVS. Liz concluded by reminding members that we are a very small specialist division but pack a strong punch and encouraged members to help us by submitting your views and considering joining Council in future.



## **8. European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO)**

Jane Clark began by thanking the AGV and FSA for support including funding continue representing AGV and UK Government vets in the EU. Jane thanked the AGV council for valued input to the FVE position paper. Jane is currently attending the EASVO General Assembly in Malta. Last June, Jane attended a meeting in London and a copy of Jane's formal back to office report was distributed by email to members and is available on the AGV website at [BVA and FVE/EASVO \(agv.org.uk\)](https://agv.org.uk). Jane reminded members that further information is available on the EASVO website (<https://easvo.fve.org/>), although the website is currently experiencing technical issues.

Jane reported that at the current EASVO General Assembly, there has been discussion regarding a new strategy including a proposal to support an EASVO representative on FVE working groups. There was no animal welfare paper for adoption at FVE. There have been efforts to ensure that vets are at the heart of a new paper on coccidiostats in the poultry industry.

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

## **9. Treasurer's Report**

Anthony Ridge delivered the Treasurer's report and began by stating that the AGV is financially healthy with approximately £14,600 in the bank account, an increase of £600 this year. Income from membership dues was £1800. Expenditure has included EASVO membership and attendance to FVE in November 2021 and BVA media training for Anthony Ridge. The Treasurer's Statement of Financial Affairs for the period of April 2021 – March 2022 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. Details of the AGV accounts are available here: - [Council Minutes and Accounts \(agv.org.uk\)](https://agv.org.uk)

Regarding membership, there are currently 5 lifetime members AGV. Last year, five members left and eleven joined and so far, this year two new members have joined.

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

## **10. 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.

## **11. Election of the AGV Council and Council Members**

Katherine Grace stood down as a Council Member and was thanked by Liz and all Council members for her contributions to the AGV. Claire White was nominated for Council membership. Mick Park was nominated for the role of President. The Officers



and Council Members were proposed by Levon Stephan and seconded by Arjen Brouwer. All were elected unanimously without objection.

### **Officers**

<b>President</b>	Mick Park
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	Liz Kelly, Kate Sharpe
<b>Secretary</b>	John Marshall
<b>Treasurer</b>	Anthony Ridge

### **Council Members**

Adrienne Conroy	Joana Crisostomo
Claire White	Jane Gibbens
Jane Clark	Osiris Ointa
Kate Richards	

### **12. Any other business**

Jane Gibbens suggested that the AGV Presidents address is shared with members and more widely as a newsletter. For example, it could be shared with new staff across Government. This will be taken forward as an action for the Secretary.

Levon Stephan raised the issue of nominations for Honorary Life Membership. Liz Kelly reminded members that the process for nominations for Honorary Life membership is described in the constitution and they should be submitted to the Council through the Secretary in advance of the AGM.

### **13. President's Closing Remarks**

Mick Park was welcomed as the new President by Liz. Mick gave a brief address recognising the contributions of the Officers and Council Members and the wider contributions of the AGV. Mick reflected on the challenges facing the country, economy, and animal health and welfare. Going forwards, Mick proposed focussing on the issues facing the profession including recruitment and retention and the role of vets in Government. Mick expressed a desire to raise awareness of the work of all AGV members in government.

### **14. Date of next meeting**

The next AGM will be held **in November 2023**, date to be advised.