

# Candidate Brief

## Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

### RCVS Council – 2/3 Lay Members

AB0201



**February 2025**

**Managing Director**

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## Welcome from Linda Belton President of the RCVS

Dear Candidate,

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in applying to be a lay member on RCVS Council. This is an important opportunity to help support us in our commitment to setting, upholding and advancing veterinary standards.

As a royal college that regulates, the RCVS is in a unique position to take on this role in a holistic manner, which means that we can effectively work with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that not only are veterinary professionals fit for practice, but the professions are fit for purpose.

To ensure we do all of this in the public interest, which includes supporting animal health and welfare and public health, it's vital that we have strong lay voices within our governance framework.

You would be joining RCVS Council, the governing body of the RCVS, at an interesting and challenging time: We have a continued push for new legislation to replace the outdated 1966 Veterinary Surgeons Act, a new strategy plan being finalized and a new headquarters close to opening. The long-awaited culmination of the Competition and Markets Authority review of the veterinary sector is due to report and 2025 looks set to be a year that reframes how we operate in key ways.

The role of members of the Council includes undertaking the governance of the College in accordance with the powers and obligations set out in the Act and the Charter, attending Council Meetings (normally six a year) and agreeing the Strategic Plan, the five-year financial plan and the budget for the forthcoming year, including fees to be levied.

The role also includes ensuring that income and expenditure are properly accounted for, investments prudently made and audited accounts are presented to the membership in the Annual Report and at the AGM. Council elects the President, Vice-Presidents and Treasurer and determines the composition of committees. Critically all members must act in accordance with the public service principles set out in the Nolan Committee's First Report on Standards in Public Life, which include selflessness (acting solely in the public interest), integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

We are looking for people with relevant experience at a senior level, e.g. board level or equivalent with understanding and knowledge of corporate governance, strategy, policy development, risk management and financial controls. Candidates will need to provide evidence in their application of relevant knowledge and experience.

## AB0201 – RCVS Council 2/3 Lay Members

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For a confidential conversation with Thewlis Graham Associates who are managing the process, please contact Sarah Thewlis, Managing Director via email at [rcvs@thewlisgraham.com](mailto:rcvs@thewlisgraham.com). Sarah will be happy to discuss this opportunity with you and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Linda Belton



## 2. About the RCVS and the Councils

The RCVS was established in 1844 by Royal Charter to be the governing body of the veterinary profession. Its statutory duties are currently laid out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The College safeguards the interests of the public and animals by ensuring that only those registered can carry out acts of veterinary surgery.

It is committed to veterinary care; through regulation of the educational, ethical and clinical standards of

veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, thereby protecting the interests of those dependent on animals, and assuring public health.

The RCVS regulates the educational, professional and ethical standards of all veterinary surgeons, regardless of the kind of work they do. A robust investigation and disciplinary mechanism is in place and will be triggered if a veterinary surgeon falls short of the standards expected by the profession and the public.

### The RCVS , Mission and Values

Our mission, as set out in the objects of our 2015 Royal Charter, is to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.

Through this, we ensure the public has high levels of confidence, because veterinary professionals are highly competent, up to date and trusted. Ultimately, we enhance society through improved animal health and welfare.

#### Our Vision

To be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals

#### Our Values

- Diverse and inclusive
- Compassionate
- Forward-looking
- Straight-talking

### **Strategic plan**

RCVS Council is currently finalising its 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, which will likely have an emphasis on collaboration, compassion and clarity. The 2020-2024 plan was ambitious and some elements of it remain ongoing. It can be found at: [rcvs.org.uk/strategy](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/strategy)  
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/how-we-work/the-role-of-the-rcvs/strategic-plan/>

### **RCVS Council**

There are currently 24 members on RCVS Council: 13 elected members (all veterinary surgeons), three appointed members for the eight Universities with a veterinary school (Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Nottingham, and Surrey), two appointed veterinary nurses and six appointed lay members. In addition the Chief Veterinary Officer is an ex-officio observer.

### **Committees, Subcommittees and Working Groups**

Council delegates much of its day to day work to a range of groups, and lay Council members will be invited to sit on, and at times chair, relevant groups. A full list of which can be found at: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/who-we-are/committees/>

## The governance of the College

The RCVS exists primarily to represent the public interest, as distinct from the British Veterinary Association (BVA), which represents the profession. So RCVS Council members are not there to represent the veterinary profession, although the elected veterinary members play a role in ensuring the views of the profession are reflected when policy is developed.

Veterinary nurses have their own Council, which includes elected veterinary nurses and appointed veterinary surgeons.



### **The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]**

1. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
2. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. The appointment of the Registrar will be undertaken in consultation with the Chief Executive. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
3. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
4. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

### **How Council members work**

1. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
  - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
  - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
  - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
  - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
  - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
  - f. Live the College's values;
  - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
  - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
  - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
  - j. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;



- k. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
- l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee

### Committees

1. There shall be the following statutory and non-statutory disciplinary and investigation committees, and appeals committees:
  - the Accreditation of Veterinary Programme Appeals Committee (appeals committee);
  - the Charter Case Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
  - the Disciplinary Committee (statutory committee);
  - the Examination Appeals Committee (appeals committee);
  - the Preliminary Investigation Committee (statutory committee);
  - the Registration Appeals Committee (appeals committee)
  - the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee);
  - the Veterinary Nurses Disciplinary Committee (non-statutory disciplinary committee); and, - the Specialist and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee (appeals committee).
2. There shall be the following standing committees:
  - the Advancement of the Professions Committee;
  - the Audit and Risk Committee;
  - the Education Committee;
  - the Finance and Resources Committee;
  - the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee;
  - the Registration Committee; - the Standards Committee; and, - the Veterinary Nurses' Council.
3. The standing committees shall report to Council and shall be constituted and work within the terms of reference set out below. Their Chairs will be elected by Council unless the Chair is role based (for example, Treasurer for Finance and Resources Committee, incoming JVP for three years for PIC/DC Liaison), with the exception of VN Council, which will elect its own Chair. The Chairs of the standing committees, with the exception of the VN Council, shall be members of RCVS Council. The Chairs of the statutory and non-statutory disciplinary, investigation and appeals committees shall be non-Council members. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee should be an external individual, independent of Council, but elected by Council. Chairs of subcommittees and other groups do not need to be Council members unless otherwise stated.
4. Chairs of the standing committees will generally hold the office for a three-year period and will be re-elected by Council annually. They will be expected to align with the chair role specification.

5. Standing committees will select their own Vice-Chairs, unless otherwise specified. The ViceChairs can be any full member of the committee (i.e. not an observer but does not have to be a Council member) apart from the Vice-Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, who should be a full member and a Council member. They will be re-elected every year by members of the relevant committee, from among self-nominated candidates, as soon as possible into the new presidential year.
6. All the standing committees will generally meet between three and six times a year, either in person or remotely. If there is no, or not enough, business to justify a meeting, the Chair can cancel a meeting. There may also be occasions when an additional meeting is required if decisions need to be made more quickly. Small amounts of business can also be conducted by email if there is not sufficient time to mount a meeting and full discussion is not required, but this should be the exception. The quorum for standing committees will generally be a simple majority of the total number of full voting members (i.e. not observers), unless otherwise specified (for example, VN Council, see below). For more detail about the operation of a meeting, see the role specification for an RCVS Committee Chair.
7. If an item crosses the remit of more than one committee, a joint meeting may be held. The Chair of the meeting will be one of the Chairs of the two committees coming together, to be agreed between them. If an item starts with one committee but, over time, becomes more relevant for another, it may be cross-referred to the most appropriate by the original Chair, or come back to Council for either a decision on the item itself, or a decision on the delegation route. The guidance of the President on the most appropriate course of action may be sought.
8. Where a joint meeting is held of two committees, each committee must be quorate in its own right. Where such joint meetings take place, the Chair of the meeting may be the Chair of either committee, or another member of either committee, at the discretion of the President. The Finance and Resources Committee and Audit and Risk Committee meet formally once per year to discuss the annual report and accounts with the auditors, and the chair shall alternate between the Treasurer and the Chair of ARC for this joint meeting.
9. The committees may appoint one or more subcommittees or working parties for such general or special purpose as they may think fit, subject to the approval of the Finance and Resources Committee and/or Council, and, subject to any contrary direction from the Council, may on behalf of the Council delegate to such subcommittees power to act in the name of the College and the Council in relation to the matters set out in their terms of reference.
10. The RCVS Officer Team may select one Observer for each of the non-statutory standing committees. If an Officer is on the Committee in another capacity, this additional Observer may not be required.  
**NB** Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency and all

have a responsibility equivalent to trustees for the governance of the College.

### **Personal Attributes:**

Candidates will need to provide evidence in their application of relevant knowledge and experience. In particular, we are seeking candidates with:

- Relevant experience at a senior (executive or non-executive) level e.g. board level or equivalent
- Understanding and knowledge of corporate governance, strategy and policy development, risk management and financial controls.
- General understanding of and interest in professional regulation, the veterinary professions, consumer protection and, animal health and welfare.
- Ideally has a level of financial expertise and business management background

**Criteria for Competence:**

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Public interest and accountability</b>	<p>Commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life</p> <p>Overriding commitment to promoting high professional standards</p> <p>Willing to maintain and uphold accountability</p> <p>A high level of probity, integrity, discretion and fairness and the ability to maintain confidentiality</p> <p>Able to uphold the principles of effective corporate governance</p>
<b>Intellectual flexibility, sound judgement and motivation</b>	<p>Thinks clearly, analytically and creatively</p> <p>Considers the bigger picture as well as detail</p> <p>Weights up other people’s ideas</p> <p>Has own ideas</p> <p>Objective - able to analyse complex information and situations before reaching a conclusion Willing to modify thinking in the light of new information or dialogue</p> <p>High levels of motivation and a willingness to constantly review and improve performance</p> <p>Tests and probes constructively and effectively to achieve the best outcomes for the RCVS’s regulatory and statutory functions</p>
<b>Effective influencing and communication</b>	<p>Can influence and persuade others using well-reasoned arguments</p> <p>Capacity to give and take advice</p>

	<p>Respects the views of others</p> <p>Debates cogently, using evidence to support views</p> <p>Open to change</p>
<b>Strategic direction</b>	<p>Capacity to develop the strategic aims and objectives of the RCVS, without being unduly influenced by individual interest groups</p> <p>Ability to reflect and review strategy direction in the light of evidence and feedback gathered during implementation.</p>
<b>Effective team working</b>	<p>Ability to build constructive working relationships with a broad range of individuals working in different roles including: fellow College Council and Committee members, staff and executive team and external experts and advisors.</p>

### 3. Remuneration: Loss of Earnings and Expenses

#### Payments

- Committee members will be office holders, not employed by the RCVS. They will be entitled to a financial loss allowance based on the number of days or half days spent on College business.
- The limits for reimbursement of financial loss and travelling expenses are set by the RCVS Council and subject to review from time to time.

#### Loss of Earnings

- Committee members who are in full or part-time employment, those who are self-employed, or those who are not in any employment are eligible to claim loss of earnings of, currently, £352 per day.
- Members entitled to claim financial loss allowance may receive a compensatory loss of earnings payment if a hearing is cancelled with less than three working days' notice.

#### Allowances

- Committee members are eligible to claim reimbursement of overnight subsistence of up to £220 per night and standard class (First Class only if an advance First-class ticket was less expensive than or equal to a standard class ticket. rail fare, economy air fare or motor mileage.
- There is no stationery/computer consumables allowance.

#### Taxation

- For those in full or part-time employment, or those not in employment, the RCVS will deduct at tax at source as though the individual was on the RCVS payroll.
- Those who are self-employed, and have a consultancy, would be paid in full on an invoice from the consultancy, on the assumption that they pay any tax due themselves.



#### 4. Eligibility

There are a number of exclusions to eligibility to apply to be a Council member:

- Having an unspent conviction for a money laundering, bribery or terrorism-related offence, among others;
- Having ever been found to be in contempt of court;
- Having ever been removed as an officer or employee of a charity for misconduct or mismanagement;
- Being subject to notification requirements under sexual offences legislation (i.e., they are on the sex offenders register); or
- Being a “designated person” under anti-terrorist legislation.
- A lay person in this instance is someone who has not been on a veterinary register either as a vet or a veterinary nurse
- Able to confirm that you have not engaged in any activity or behaviour that would be likely to bring the profession into disrepute or undermine public confidence in the profession.

#### 5. Timeline, Application Process and How to apply

Dates	Activity
4 March 4pm	Closing date for applications.
w/c 10 March & 17 March	Interviews by Thewlis Graham Associates - online
w/c 24 March	Candidates informed of outcome
w/c 7 April	Independent Selection Panel interviews - online
w/c 14 April	Candidates informed of outcome

#### Application Process

Thewlis Graham Associates will acknowledge all applications. These will be assessed against the criteria in the Role and Responsibilities section and the people who best meet these will be invited for an online interview with Thewlis Graham Associates.

Those candidates not invited to interview will be advised by email by 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Longlisted candidates will be advised by email. After a consultation between the RCVS and Thewlis Graham Associates a Shortlist will be drawn up and shortlisted candidates invited for interview by an Independent Selection Panel. All candidates will be informed of the outcome following this date.

### How to Apply

To apply for this role, please complete the five steps below and email your documentation to [rcvs@thewlisgraham.com](mailto:rcvs@thewlisgraham.com) quoting reference AB0201:

1. Your CV in Word format only.
2. A cover letter in Word format, outlines your interest in the role and the RCVS. Maximum 2 pages only.
3. A completed Additional Information form which can be completed online [here](#).
4. The name, job title, organisation, email address and mobile number of two professional referees. (Please note referees will not be approached without your prior permission).
5. Please complete the online Diversity Monitoring form, please see link in the next section.

If you would like to apply in a different format please email: [rcvs@thewlisgraham.com](mailto:rcvs@thewlisgraham.com)

### Diversity Monitoring

**Please click on [this link](#) to complete the diversity monitoring online survey**

This is independent of the recruitment process but please do send a completed form with your application as Thewlis Graham Associates is committed to monitoring and analysing diversity information so that we can ensure that our processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group.

Any information provided on this form will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. It will not be seen by anybody directly involved in the selection process. No information will be published or used in any way which allows any individual to be identified



## Appendix: Code of conduct for Council (and committee) members

### Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

1. The RCVS has statutory and Royal Charter functions; and, through the RCVS Trust (also known as RCVS Knowledge), charitable functions. These are set out more fully in the Charter; the Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) 1966; and the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association. See: <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/royal-charter-and-legislation>.

### Purpose of this Code

2. In order for the RCVS to command the confidence of all interested parties, it is necessary for the Council members to observe appropriate standards of conduct. The purpose of this Code is to help to ensure that high standards are met and that those who act in the name of the RCVS are beyond reproach in the way they conduct themselves and the business of the RCVS. The required standards are set out in this Code that applies to all members of Council upon appointment. Its provisions apply generally to those who sit on committees; sub-committees; working parties, etc.

### Principles

3. In performing their duties, Council members should observe the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'); namely:

**Selflessness:** holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest;

**Integrity:** holders of public office should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships;

**Objectivity:** holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias;

**Accountability:** holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this;

**Openness:** holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so;

**Honesty:** holders of public office should be truthful;

**Leadership:** holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

#### 4. General guidelines

- a. Council members are expected to:
  - a. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
  - b. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
  - c. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
  - d. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
  - e. Live the College's values (diverse and inclusive; compassionate; forward thinking; straight talking);
  - f. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
  - g. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
  - h. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
  - i. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
  - j. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders.

#### Specific guidelines

5. Council members are responsible for ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their role and the role of the RCVS as set out in the VSA 1966, and the Royal Charters. Council Members are not elected or appointed to represent any constituency, and all have a responsibility equivalent to trustees for the governance of the College. This includes overall fiscal and legal responsibility. Having been elected or appointed, they have a responsibility to make themselves available for meetings of the Council and any committees, sub-committees, working parties, etc., to which they have been appointed (unless they are unable, with good reason, to do so); and to be diligent in reading papers and giving appropriate consideration to issues to ensure that they are making decisions on a fully informed basis.
6. Council members should follow the principles of mutual respect in all their activities and be prepared to accept that others may have equally strong views in good faith that differ from their own. Council members must uphold high standards of courtesy and respect in all Council debates and meetings. Council members should treat colleagues with respect and not engage in any behaviour towards any colleague or member of staff that might reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying or harassment.

#### Collective responsibility

7. Council members are collectively responsible for the decisions, even if they have voted against, abstained from voting or were absent when the decision was made, and are expected to respect and support the collective decision, when communicating externally.

#### Confidentiality

8. Council members must not disclose information that has been shared with them but designated by the RCVS as private or confidential. If members are in any way unsure if they can disclose information, then they should in the first

instance seek advice from the President. If members disagree with a classification of private or confidential then members should raise with the relevant Committee Chair / President

### Conflicts of interest

9. The '*Policy for managing conflicts of interest*' (see: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/conflicts-of-interest-policy/>) requires all Council members to file a Declaration of Interest; to keep it up to date; and to declare any additional interests as necessary at each meeting and generally to comply with the requirements of the policy.

### Communication

10. Council members have a role in communicating with the public and the profession about what the RCVS does but should take care to ensure that what they say is accurate and consistent with established policies and procedures – if in doubt, they should consult the Communications Department. Any communication with the media on behalf of the RCVS must be discussed with the Communications Department in advance.
11. Council members have a responsibility to distinguish clearly when speaking or writing in any public forum, between the views of the RCVS and their personal views, or of any other organisation they may be affiliated with.

### Enforcement

12. Complaints that an RCVS Council member has breached this Code of Conduct should be made at the earliest opportunity to the RCVS President /Registrar, in accordance with the '*Policy for Dealing with Complaints about Council Members*'.