

AVS Winter Meeting January 27th 2006
The Constitution Public House, Camden

Apologies:
none

In attendance:

Claire Underwood – President
Alexis Holley – JVP, Bristol Senior
Ian Beamish – Secretary
Stuart Patterson – RVC Student Union President (guest of the secretary.)
Helen Armson – JAVS Editor, Cambridge Senior
Eilidh Hawkins – Treasurer, Edinburgh Senior
Heather Marie Niman - Welfare
Susie Fitzharris - IVSA
John Remnant – Bristol Junior
Natalie Haddon – Cambridge Junior
Sally Hessey – Edinburgh Junior
Sophie Duguid – Glasgow Senior
Anna Deveys – Glasgow Junior
Katie Blakeman - Liverpool Senior
Hannah Parkin - Liverpool Junior
Kate Lee – RVC Senior
Lara Barry – RVC Junior
Derek Thorpe – BVA
Tim Sainty – BVA

Pre-meeting

It was agreed that Stuart Patterson would be allowed to attend the meeting. He is the current SU president of the Royal Veterinary College.

1. Presidents Report 2005-2006

The past year has been a successful and progressive one for AVS: with many new projects started and much to continue with. I would like to thank everyone on the committee this year for their hard work and commitment. Particular thanks go to Ian Beamish, who has done a fantastic job over the past 2 years as secretary: Sophie for all her hard work organising sports weekend: and Kate for a successful congress.

Over the past year our focus has been on the following areas

- 1) Completion of the AVS survey, the results of which were released to the press on 6/2/2006.
- 2) Organisation of the AVS ski trip- well done to all involved, the trip which was to Alp d'Huez from 30/12 to 07/01/2006 and was an excellent success; I would like to thank Alex Corbishley, Lee Meakin, Sarah Hutchinson, David Sugden, and Liz Baldwin for their hard work organising the trip. I would also

like to thank Lloyd and Whyte and the BVA for their sponsorship of the trip. There will be another ski trip organised 2005/2006, so look out for info on that later this year!

- 3) EMS guideline: It has been proposed that a set of guidelines will be created by AVS for students to take with them to see practice; to help ensure they achieve necessary targets. We are currently in discussion with the vet schools and the deans on this matter to see if these guidelines can be put into EMS packs. The guidelines will also be published on the AVS site (<http://www.avs-uk.org.uk/>)
- 4) Meetings with the Association of Veterinary Teachers and Research Workers (AVTRW)- despite being hampered by communication problems in the earlier part of the year; we have arranged for an AVS rep to go to AVTRW meetings and to re-establish any lost links in this area. In addition an AVS rep is going to the AVTRW congress to represent AVS's viewpoint in debates over Nottingham Vet School and other current issues. This is a great move for AVS as it will enable us to lobby those who are directly involved in education.
- 5) EMS funding- preliminary steps have been taken to gain some form of funding for EMS. It has been agreed that the ideal route for this to take would be to discuss the issue with the chief veterinary officer, with the objective of gaining funding from government, as a sort of 'compensation' for vet students not getting and with any tuition fees, but having to do a large amount of veterinary public healthy work that prepares us for work in the state sector.
- 6) There has been a focus on raising the profile of AVS and encouraging more applications for committee positions, this will be continued over the next year- anyone interested in getting involved with the AVS committee please get in touch with Alexis Holley or John Remnant
- 7) Heather our welfare rep has been making excellent progress representing students' views to both the animal welfare foundation and to committees involved with student welfare; with the aim of improving our wellbeing- see her report for more info on that!

On top of all this there have been AVS representatives sent to BVA council meetings, the members services group of the BVA, the House of Commons, the House of Lord's, BSAVA congress, the BVA 2010 brainstorming day, SPVS young graduates weekend, and the AWF/ BVA animal welfare forum.

In the next year AVS needs to continue to work on these issues in particular focus should be upon:

- 1) EMS guidelines- these will be published on the website and approval will be sought from the individual vet schools
- 2) The website will be updated in the next year to include links to sites useful to vet student such as teaching videos of surgical procedures.
- 3) An internships database will be set up on the AVS website with details of internships available in the UK.
- 4) Progress will be made on attempting to gain funding for EMS, as described above

- 5) The ski trip will be continued with emphasis on early advertisement and involvement of all the vet schools, and also be open to new graduates and staff at all of the universities.

As my year as president comes to an end, and I step into the more advisory backbench role of senior vice president I would like to say thanks and good luck to everyone on the committee. I've had a wicked time being on AVS for the past four years. For anyone interested in getting involved I couldn't recommend it more! All the best for the new year!

2. Vice Presidents Report

Lexi reported that she had not attended the last MSG meeting.

3. Welfare Report

Heather reported that the latest animal welfare article was having its second hearing. Heather has produced a spread sheet of animal charities that allow work experience both in the UK and abroad. This is to be published on the website.

The AWF have requested that they be allowed to give a series of small talks, they would also like the Association to provide them with feedback on the current Animal Welfare teaching within colleges.

It was also requested that a question to this effect be submitted for the next AVS/BVA survey.

Heather suggested tail docking posters be sent to colleges for their AVS/BVA notice boards.

4. Treasurers Report

The Association financial records have now been audited. Several loans are outstanding which Eilidh and Derek are to resolve. The account balance currently stands at £7000 with around £7000 owed.

5. IVSA

Our new IVSA rep is Susie Gamage, John and Lexi are to communicate with her. An update from the Hungary exchange is expected.

6. JAVS

As ever articles and pictures are requested. The deadline for the current edition has now passed but members are still encouraged to write in anticipation of the next edition.

Stuart Patterson, SU President at the RVC, stated that JAVS requires more advertisement within colleges as many are still unaware of its existence. The possibility of advertising through colleges own unions was raised and should be minuted for discussion at the next meeting when the college presidents are present.

7. Website

Oli Viner is to arrange the handover of the website to BVA HQ. He has been contacted and has agreed to carry this out.

It was suggested that despite the dissolution of the Executive position of Website Representative, it should be reinstated as an advertised position. This position need only be filled if someone capable arises. BVA would continue to manage the site in the absence of such a rep and would co-manage the site with the rep when available.

JAVS articles are to be published to the website as well as current ongoing issues within the Association and current status on our projects.

Stuart Patterson suggested that minutes of the meeting be published to the website. This was unanimously agreed. These minutes will be published to the website, subject to approval.

Once the website is fully running a chat forum will be set-up with a disclaimer to remove responsibility for the content away from the Association.

A new section of the website is to be published detailing internships and residencies available throughout the UK. Senior reps will need to find out this information from their colleges and submit it for placement on the website.

8. EMS Guidelines

BVA announced that they would like to be mediators between AVS and the colleges. BVA will take the guidelines to CAP on the 15th February and will provide feedback. It was decided that AVS did not necessarily require the universities direct involvement as they were by definition only a guide. Many of the colleges already have their own set in place based upon the RCVS day one skills. It was agreed that these guidelines would allow a more distinguishable and progressive line of practical involvement throughout clinical teaching. Claire is to write an article about the guidelines for Off the Record. Claire also agreed to write to the AVTRW with regards to the guidelines.

The guidelines will be consulted amongst the Committee and will be published to the website. They will be advertised in the Veterinary Record.

9. Notice boards

Liverpool, Glasgow, London, Cambridge and Bristol all have board space available. The board will need to include sections for; 'your reps,' (with photos,) 'What we're doing' (listing our current targets and projects,) 'Social events' (for congress, ski and sports,) Welfare, scholarships and travel grants and JAVS and Website adverts. Also a centre piece of 'AVS and BVA' to alert people what the board is about. This will require designing and printing before being sent to veterinary colleges.

10. Presidential Visits

Senior reps to liaise with BVA for suitable dates. There is £250 to be spent at each campus for pizza and drinks etc.

11. BVA/AVS Survey

A press release will be issued by BVA on 6th February. Lexi will need to write an official AVS response for issues that arise. It was agreed that two hard copies of the survey would be issued to each campus, one for the library and one to be tied to the notice board. Those copies being placed on the notice board would be 'low-grade' versions printed in house at BVA.

It was suggested that AVS requests feedback on these survey from the College deans.

12. Graduate fee systems

Reps are requested to find out what the fee structure is within their colleges for under-, post- and overseas graduates.

13. Suicide within the profession

The first VBF working group meeting has taken place where their mission statement was decided upon. It is to reduce the suicide rate within the veterinary profession.

Stuart Patterson stated that the RVC's SU had received an offer from the Samaritans to train their union. However they wished to charge and so it was rejected. The local Samaritans group said that they would run an evening session, working within the college. John is to contact SU presidents and instigate proceedings for these meeting to be arranged.

Heather will write an official letter on behalf of AVS, to the VBF. Space will be allocated in the website to deal with this issue and support and VBF help lines will be advertised in every issue of JAVS,

Ian Beamish announced that Mr John Somers, Exeter Universities Head of Drama has been in contact with the RVC with regards the production of a play aimed at provoking discussion about veterinary suicide. Mr Somers has had considerable previous success with his productions having worked alongside the NHS. It was agreed that AVS would send a letter of approval for his planned work and offer some financial incentive toward his production in order that our name appear on the programmes. Mr Somers will submit an article for the next JAVS edition.

14. Sports Weekend Glasgow

It was agreed that Dublin students behaviour at this years Sports weekend was unacceptable. John will make contact with their reps and ensure their attendance at the next meeting. AVS will impose a £10 increase on the price of each of their tickets and accommodation will not be provided. Senior reps are instructed not provide Dublin students with tickets from their own colleges.

15. Ski Trip

Advertisements need to start as soon as possible if we are to build on the success of last years' trip. These adverts are to be place in the Vet Record and on our website and notice boards. Feedback needs to be sent to last years sponsors to encourage repeat sponsorship.

16. Rep Changeover

All who are presently on the e-mail loop are to remain there until 1st January 2007. BVA will send an e-mail to inform them of their removal. There is to be a meeting in early march organised by John followed by dinner to initiate the new reps and ready them for a 'flying start' at the summer meeting.

17. Nottingham Vet School

It was announced that through administrative error AVS has not attended an open evening for Nottingham's new veterinary school. Lexi will send a letter of apology and request a meeting to allow Nottingham to discuss any concerns. We will also need to

arrange for AVS members (president JVP and Secretary) attend their freshers weeks and advertise AVS and open nominations for their reps. They will also have to pay subs to AVS.

18. Vet Helpline

The helpline has stated that they have had call of initiation ceremonies getting out of hand. It is accepted that whilst initiation ceremonies are a part of tradition, there is a distinct line that must not be crossed. Bullying is wholly unacceptable. It was suggested that freshers' events be less drink oriented and include comedy evenings, ice skating etc.

19. Any other Business

It was suggested that reps stand up briefly after each AVS meeting and announce what has been done. This could be accompanied by an e-mail with the website address on it.

Freshers packs are to go ahead for 2006. Welfare, president and secretary are to liaise with BVA to agree their contents. One suggestion was a BVA logo lab coat voucher which can be returned in exchange for your sized lab coat.

The next meeting is to be arranged by the Associations new secretary.