



## Minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 9.30 am Telephone Conference

In conference: Kevin Isaacs, Sionagh Smith, Mark Stidworthy, Ken Smith, Mark Dagleish, Sue Newband

### 1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008

The previously circulated minutes were approved and were available on the BSVP website with immediate effect.

### 2 Actions arising from those minutes not elsewhere on the agenda

There were no actions arising that were not present elsewhere on the agenda.

It was noted that one month's notice was required for the agenda of the AGM and this fell on October 8<sup>th</sup>, one week after the meeting. This gave some urgency to some actions to be discussed.

### 3 Honorary Secretary's report

**Membership update** – current membership stands at 84, and a number of in transit applications associated with the AGM. Each module generated a new clutch of applications for membership. Members were still overwhelmingly in anatomic pathology, with a very few clinical pathologists. MS holds the up to date copy of the database, and SN forwards application forms as they are received, having passed membership dues to the Treasurer. Currently, SN was sending only a receipt to new members. MS had previously sent a welcome email with relevant “current activities”, but recently had not been keeping abreast of this.

**ACTION:** MS to generate a generic welcome letter, without current activities but with salient information, to pass to SN, for her to send out with receipt to each joining member. MS to update and forward appropriate member data to SN. MS/SN to review renewal status of all members, and send out reminders if needed.

**Charity status update** – MS had queried how the pending application with the Charities Commission could be advanced, and was awaiting a response. In order to facilitate this, an alteration to Article 2.1 of the Constitution would be made at the AGM. The replacement wording would be: “To provide continuing professional development and training to ensure high professional standards in veterinary pathology for the benefit of animals and the general public.” In addition, features of the website that were particularly focussed on career progression, that could be construed as a benefit to an individual's personal career achievement (such as jobs vacancies, career progression advice) would be removed from the BSVP website and placed on the Careers in Vet Path website, with a link from the BSVP website explicitly stating that individual career development was outside the remit of the Society. No secure (non-public) area for member only access was anticipated at present on the BSVP website. Further modification, as necessary, would be made to the Charities Commission application form, to remove inappropriate language that suggested activities that were outside the aims of the Society's charitable objectives, which could include any references to political activity or advocacy.



**ACTION:** KI to modify links within website. MS to continue dialogue with Charities Commission and attempt a resubmission once the Constitution amendment was in place. KI/MS to include modification of the Constitution as a specific agenda item for the AGM.

**Monthly bulletin/Email** – No action had taken place with this. MD suggested that perhaps a quarterly bulletin would be more realistic to start with, and this was adopted. Regular items suggested included “from the schools” (a round up of pathology activities within each vet school by a resident pathologist, rotating through each school in turn), “welcome to new members” (a list of people joining/renewing since last bulletin), “upcoming events” (BSVP and external), occasional articles. **ACTION:** MS to draw up a template and generate a first draft, circulate, and when approved, SN to circulate.

#### **4 Honorary Treasurer’s report**

**2007/2008 Accounts** – The accountants had just completed a set of draft accounts (paper copies) for the 2007/2008 financial year, which SN had forwarded to KS on 29<sup>th</sup> September. Following review by KS, SN would request a pdf version of the finalised accounts for circulation to Council and subsequently to all members prior to the AGM. At the AGM, only a summary of the finalised accounts to June 2008 was required, but an ongoing approximate summary of current activity may also be helpful.

**ACTION:** KS to review 2007/2008 accounts, SN to obtain copies of finalised version as a pdf and circulate to Council and then all members prior to the AGM. SN to prepare a summary of financial activity in progress since June 2008 for KS in advance of the AGM.

**Account activity** – Apart from one outstanding honorarium payment, accounts for Module 3 were complete. Approximately half of the predicted expenditure for Module 4 was still outstanding, and the organisation of the AGM would also require some further expenditure.

**Current status** – The current account contained £18426.94, and the savings account £4145.41. After discussion, it was agreed that a current balance of approximately £8400 should be ample for ongoing activities, and that £10000 would be transferred with immediate effect from the current account to the savings account.

**ACTION:** KS to undertake transfer.

**Liaison with Secretariat** – The arrangements were working very well, and KS reported that the oversight role was much more manageable, and the overall financial activity of the Society moving forward with greater ease and clarity, now that day to day transactions were being handled by SN. This laid the ground for a greatly reduced burden for the incoming Honorary Treasurer, and should enable that individual to focus on their responsibilities as a Trustee with greater efficiency.

**Handover to incoming Honorary Treasurer** – A nomination had been made for the post of Honorary Treasurer, and it was believed that the nominated individual was happy with this. KS discussed how the handover would be facilitated, and would contact the incoming Treasurer during the next week to discuss whether they were attending the AGM, and whether they wished to meet to discuss their role prior to this. If so, KS would arrange.

**ACTION:** KS to speak to the nominated individual during the week prior to October 8<sup>th</sup>. KS and SN would coordinate the changeover of authorised signatories, and BSVP stationery would be updated appropriately after AGM had ratified the new appointments to Council.



## 5 Education report

**Module 4 status report** – Feedback from the Module had been generally very good. 26 registrants had resulted in actual attendances of 25 and 24 on the two days of the Module. A larger number of more experienced pathologists attended this Module, with relatively few trainees or residents. This probably reflected the topic (neuropathology), perhaps viewed as “specialist”. The intimacy of the venue had worked well, and the front of house arrangements were smooth. One problem that had arisen was that a folder of printed notes had gone missing, but was still required for a participant who had been unable to attend having registered and paid. One of the speakers had also requested a complete set of notes, and spare copies needed to be held on file by the Module organiser (as a basis for planning the repeat of the Module in due course) and by BSVP Secretariat.

**ACTION:** MD to arrange the printing of additional copies for these purposes.

**Purchase of notes** – requests had been received from those not attending Modules to purchase copies of Module notes. It was decided that it was a firm policy of BSVP that notes could only be provided to those registering and paying for Modules. Modules depended on registration fees and needed to operate on at least a break-even basis, and numbers could reduce to such an extent that viability was compromised. Furthermore, printing and collation costs for Module notes are a significant expenditure, as is the time needed by the Module coordinator to deal with requests. Most importantly, the content was not the property of the BSVP but of the lecturers, whose copyright needed to be respected, and who may decline to provide handouts in future unless limited circulation to Module registrants could be guaranteed.

**ACTION:** All further requests for note purchases to be declined on the above grounds, and individuals making requests to be encouraged to attend Modules instead.

**Module 5 status report** – Simon Priestnall of RVC had taken over the responsibility for organising this Module, which (under a reorganisation of previous Module sequence) would now be on the respiratory system, reflecting his particular expertise and interest. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 had been scheduled for the Module, and preliminary acquisition of quotes from Bristol Vet School as a possible venue had been obtained. Initial evaluation suggested that these were expensive in comparison with previous venues, and efforts would be made to seek more preferential rates, and to investigate alternative venues, such as RVC.

**ACTION:** SS/SP to approach RH to see whether there were any opportunities for cost savings at Bristol, and also to check dates (actual quote listed July 11/12 not June).

**Modules 6 and beyond** – Following discussion, a revised schedule for the remaining Modules was agreed. A possible organiser for Module 6 had been identified, and she was keen to do skin, with endocrine seeming a logical combination. By combining cardiovascular and muscle, and haematopoietic and skeletal, it was hoped that attendances could be maintained at stable levels across all 9 Modules over 4 years. In view of the extremely small current membership with a clinical pathology interest, clinical pathology would be removed from the first round of Modules, to generate additional space to focus on core anatomic pathology. This, along with the other topics and general educational level, would be reviewed by the Education Subcommittee over the next year or so. SS circulated a revised schedule:



MONTH	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
June	1. General principles 1	3. General principles 3	5. Respiratory	8. Cardiovascular and muscle
September	2. General principles 2	4. Neuropathology	6. Skin and endocrine	9. Haematopoietic and skeletal
December			7. Alimentary (including liver & pancreas)	

Planning for any second round of Modules would need to start soon, and discussion would be needed. Issues included whether the second round would be a similar repeat, or aimed at a modified target audience in the light of attendances so far. Feedback should be sought from attendees and the wider membership on the suitability of the content and educational level of the Modules so far and there should be more analysis of the demographics of attendees. Advance publicity, the need to plan well in advance to obtain desirable calendar slots, and additional considerations such as options to book the whole series of Modules at a discount may need to be considered.

**ACTION:** SS to confirm Module organiser for Module 6 and initiate preliminary work approaching potential speakers. All - start to raise awareness of need to start planning a second cycle of Modules fairly soon.

**Venues for Modules** – the issue of fixed versus rotating venues for Modules and the AGM remains unresolved and was discussed again. With a centralised venue, repeat deals, standardisation, stability of local organising personnel and opportunities for cost savings existed. A major problem was that different participants tended to have a different idea of the ideal venue. A key factor was ease of communications (particularly air and rail) and for this reason, whilst excellent in many respects, the Nottingham venue had not met with widespread approval. With venue rotation, cost variation, increased logistical burdens for organisers and the need to establish each aspect of organisation afresh (e.g. lecture halls and projectors, catering, accommodation links) were the main problems. In addition, a rotation policy could be criticised if certain venues (such as Vet Schools) were missed out for perfectly reasonable reasons (such as cost).

**ACTION:** SN to provide basic cost breakdown for organising a BSTP meeting, for comparison. SS/SP to consider RVC as an alternative if Bristol arrangements seemed prohibitive.

**AVTRW Pathology Day** – BSVP would continue to support and promote any Veterinary Pathology day at the annual AVTRW conference in Scarborough (for example by posting on the website and in literature). It would not, however, contribute to the organisation of the day in future. In the longer term, BSVP’s own aims may be better achieved by using the limited resources at its disposal to develop a one or two day course of applied skills training for trainees at a different time and venue.



**Appointment of new Educational Coordinator** – No volunteers or nominations had yet been received. A number of potential candidates were discussed, who would now be approached to see whether they would accept nomination. The role in the future was envisaged as being more that of the Chair of an Education Committee of co-opted members, with Module organisation delegated to volunteers under the oversight of the Committee (and with much of the administrative burden taken over by the Secretariat) and with the Coordinator to provide direction, contacts and educational experience.

**ACTION:** KS and SS to approach names mentioned urgently, in order to attempt to secure a confirmed nomination prior to the AGM.

**Liaison with Secretariat** – SN and SS reported that many of the administrative tasks associated with Module organisation were now in the hands of the Secretariat. Furthermore, SN's experience with BSTP was proving invaluable. Standardised protocols, materials and documentation had been or were being developed.

**ACTION:** SS and SN to liaise on modification of forms for speakers to incorporate an option to request an honorarium (this was currently absent and had caused confusion).

## **6 BSVP Secretariat**

**Status report** – It was felt that liaison between SN and the Council members was effective and starting to generate real time and efficiency savings, freeing Council members from administrative burdens. Members communicating with the Secretariat were still sometimes surprised not to reach a Council member immediately, but it would take time for the new structure to be widely understood.

**Membership applications** – SN identified a lack of clarity in the current arrangements for membership application. Currently, application forms were received with cheques by the Secretariat, and were banked and a receipt sent to the applicant. Basic member data was added to the Secretariat mailing list, and then a copy of the application form was sent to MS for data entry onto the main BSVP database. The banking of the cheque implied that membership had been granted, but there was no actual mechanism for formally confirming membership (e.g. review by Council, or a designated Council member). This had the potential to be problematic if an applicant was ineligible or inappropriate. Furthermore, other than the receipt, no formal welcome was being issued to new members, as MS was reviewing applicants in arrears and had been unable to keep up with his former "what's coming up in the BSVP" welcome emails. SN felt unable to issue a general welcome letter (which in any case had not been provided for her yet), until a more formal protocol for member acceptance was developed. A further suggestion was that a list of new members might be included in the quarterly bulletin once this was established.

**ACTION:** MS to work with SN to work out a protocol to address this issue, for review by Council at its next meeting, and MS to provide a suitable generic welcoming document for subsequent use.



## 7 Changes to Council at AGM

Currently, only one accepted nomination had been received, for the post of Honorary Treasurer. KS needed to speak again to the individual to confirm their continued willingness to serve, and to discuss transitional arrangements (primarily changeover of signatories). As discussed above, no nominations had been received for Education Coordinator or Honorary President. Discussions focussed on suitable individuals for these posts who might be willing to accept nomination. Ideally each would be a senior figure well known in the veterinary pathology community. Particularly for education, more use would in future be made on committees of temporarily co-opted expertise (for example former Council members and volunteers), but Council itself would remain small. **ACTION:** Various members to approach potential nominees within their sphere of influence, to try and secure accepted nominations before the AGM. KS to discuss Honorary Treasurer handover arrangements with nominee.

## 8 Website

**Statistics** – 2000 views, 1755 visits in the last month. This was stable from the same period last year. A new macro case had been added, but more were urgently needed, as were details of meetings. KI was happy to continue to operate the site for the moment, but would welcome additional editorial input.

**ACTION:** KI to move jobs and careers advice areas to linked [www.vetpathcareers.com](http://www.vetpathcareers.com) website, to avoid conflict of interest flagged by the Charities Commission with respect to individual career enhancement.

## 9 Annual meeting

**November 8<sup>th</sup>, Nottingham Vet School** – Local organisation was in place and largely a repetition of last year's event, although computer facilities were not needed this year. KS intended to visit PB, the local organiser, on the day before the meeting. The speakers and programme were confirmed, and had been circulated by email to all members.

**ACTIONS:** Folders – SN to generate folders for attendees, to include lecture notes, programme for the day, note paper, hospitality announcements. Laminated signs – KI to generate six A3 laminated BSVP signs, 3 with left arrows and 3 with right. Registration desk – SN to speak to PB about arrangements for this. Local chair – KS to ask PB whether he was willing to be the local chair. AGM agenda and notice – needed to be sent out by 10<sup>th</sup> October. To include: 1. Minutes of 2007 meeting, 2. Hon. Secretary, 3. Hon Treasurer, 4. Educational Co-ordinator and 5. Hon President's reports. This year, to use standardised format provided by KI, but as individual presentations rather than the compilation of last year. 6. Election of Council members. 7. Modification to Constitution. 8. AOB. SN to compile and circulate agenda for agreement; then issue by email on or before 10<sup>th</sup> October. Recruitment – There was an urgent need to recruit attendees. A new deadline date of 21<sup>st</sup> October was set. Additional notification of the meeting would be sent by SN with the AGM notice, and there would be another follow up 2 weeks after that.

## 10 SAC on Veterinary Pathology, Royal College of Pathologists

This would take place on January 27<sup>th</sup> at 12.30 pm. MS had been proposed as the BSVP representative (for which post RCPATH had given approval), and would attend and provide feedback at a subsequent Council meeting. This would become a regular agenda item for BSVP Council.



**11 Any other business**

There was no other business.

**12 Date of next meeting**

Turnover of Council members meant that the date of the next meeting could not be decided as yet. A face to face meeting would probably be desirable for this, although future use of teleconference was probably likely due to cost and time constraints.

Minutes prepared by Mark Stidworthy, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008