

Minutes of the 1st AGM of the British Society of Veterinary Pathology

**Venue: University of Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science,
13th October 2007**

The President presented a report of the activities of the BSVP since its inception.

Organisation

The Council comprises: Kevin Isaacs (President); Ken Smith (Hon. Treasurer); Mark Stidworthy (Hon. Secretary); Sionagh Smith (Education Organiser).

Council meetings

There have been six Council meetings, held in Harrogate, since the society was set up and several *ad hoc* meetings. The Education group has had two face to face meetings and put in lots of background work.

Membership

The BSVP currently has 65 members comprising UK: 59; Ireland: 3; France: 1; USA: 1; Russian Federation: 1. The current employment of members can be summarized as academic: 18; commercial: 15; government: 13; industry: 11; research institute: 4; clinical work: 3; student: 1.

The training status of the membership is “trainee”: 28; non-trainee: 37 and the qualifications held include F/MRCPPath and DipECVP, with an occasional DipACVP.

Administration

Data protection registration is in place as is the Constitution and we are waiting for ratification of charitable status. An application has been submitted, which has involved time-consuming and wide-ranging documentation.

We now have a presence on the internet with a web site (www.bsvp.org), which has downloadable copies of the Constitution, minutes of Council meetings, a membership application form, meetings application forms, meetings programmes and events (including today’s meeting).

Educational subcommittee

This committee is organised and chaired by Sionagh Smith with special thanks to Sandra Dawson who has been of great assistance.

Two educational modules have been organized; the first in Edinburgh by Sionagh Smith and the second in Glasgow by Sionagh Smith & Adrian Philbey. We have also contributed to the AVTRW pathology day organized by Ken Smith & Alun Williams and participated in the SPVS Final Year Seminar (Cheryl Scudamore, Ken Smith & Sionagh Smith). There have also been two Scottish regional meetings.

The two educational modules have been organized with two face-to-face meetings and lots of phone calls and emails.

The plan is for 9 modules over 4 years but the format will respond to changing needs. There is a didactic lecture format, which is considered most appropriate and no practical sessions are being organised in order to keep the duration of the meetings to a minimum and limit the amount of time attendees are away from work. Weekdays are gaining favour over weekends and each module is 2 days long.

We are currently using different venues for each module but we may investigate a central location in future.

Details of the first four modules are summarised below. Two have been staged and two are in advanced stages of planning:

Module 1 General Principles I, Edinburgh, June 2007

Topics: Safety, zoonoses, fixation, cytochemistry, artefacts, special diagnostics and cell death.

There were 25 delegates; 19 BSVP members and 6 non members. 22 are UK-based and 3 were non-UK (France, Netherlands and Russia). Their employment included 11 in government laboratories, 8 private institutes (CRO, charitable foundation, zoo) and 6 from academia.

Module 2 General Principles II, Glasgow, September 2007

Topics: inflammation, wound healing, cellular adaptations & accumulations, storage diseases, immune system.

There were 26 delegates; 21 BSVP members and 5 non members. 23 were UK or Ireland-based and 3 non-UK (Russia, Norway, and Netherlands). Their employment involved 8 in government laboratories, 9 from private institutes and 9 from academia.

Module 3 General Principles III, RVC, Summer 2008

Topics: neoplasia, basic genetics, haemostasis

Module 4: neuropathology

This is currently being organised by Mark Dalgleish and Sandra Scholes.

Module feedback

This has been generally very good and some attendees have expressed desire for a social event, which was addressed in 2nd module by one of delegates (Ross Harley). Saturdays are unpopular as a day for modules and this will be changed in future modules. Ease of access to the venues is a consistent concern for some and this will be constantly reviewed. There have been many positives especially the speakers as well as the format and the food. Negative comments seem to be reducing with time. The demographics are different from our initial expectations, which has slightly altered our approach.

Finances

We have established a bank account at Lloyds TSB with the Council as signatories.

Accounts to 30 June 2007

There was an opening balance of £2,000.00 including a transferred surplus from the 'Kegworth' meeting committee of £3,249.00 and membership income (45 members) of £1,125.00. The total assets/balance at 30 June 2007 was £10,972.18, inclusive of interest on accounts, and the current account has £6,945.14. There is a savings account of £4,027.04, which was opened on 19 February 2007 with a transfer from the current account of £4000.

Accounts for module 1

The receipts included delegate income of £5,450 and expenditure of £2,867.42 as follows:

Speakers' fees and expenses: £761.12

Catering: £933.96

Printing: £857.39

University administration: £314.95

Surplus on module: £2,582.58

An update on the BSVP financial status includes total assets at 24 September 2007* of £15,027.05 (Current account: £10,974.70 and Savings account: £4,052.35).

Web site & communications

The web master is Kevin Isaacs. The web site address is www.bsvp.org and we have approximately 2,000 visits each month and 10,000 hits. There has been steady growth over the year but we may be entering a plateau phase. The front page is the entry point and major source of information but other pages include meetings & courses, downloadable information and downloadable forms. Trainees have been allocated a dedicated area incorporating the popular www.vetpathtraining web site.

Distance learning using the Digital Slidebox site has been trialled and EQA was considered and then dropped as an option. 4 macro cases have been submitted (from Nicky Parry (2), Mark Stidworthy and James Cartwright.)

We have had 3 job adverts placed to date with one pending. No charge has been made – yet.

I have designed a BSVP logo in two formats; one for the web, which is a small file with 3-D appearance and a larger, printable file with 2-D optimisation for headed paper.

A newsletter in a downloadable PDF format is possible as I have the appropriate graphics programs but we need an editor to collect contributions. A trainees' spokesperson would also be useful to keep others up-to-date and to advise on web site content, new links and other courses.

My web skills are limited, so any help is welcomed and we need information on meetings, issues, links, news, gossip and items for the diary.

Future events

The following events are currently being organised:

Scottish Regional Meeting: December 6th 2007, 5.30 pm (sherry & mince pies), Upper Lecture Theatre, Easter Bush Veterinary Centre, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

AVTRW: Scarborough, March 17th - 20th 2008, Pathology day (provisional programme): Presentation skills, Researching the literature, Photomicrography, Case reports.

Module 3: RVC, July 2008 (see above).

Module 4: Edinburgh, September 2008, (see above).
Annual meeting: Nottingham, October 2008, format (undecided)

Future plans

It is difficult to look too far into the future but we aim to continue to provide training and CPD and try to expand our activities. In the longer term we hope to offer more support for trainees by establishing bursaries, reducing fees for courses and provide more & better meetings with overseas speakers.

Joint ventures (e.g. AVTRW) will continue to be considered as any opportunities arise.

We aim to achieve financial stability with a modest surplus from courses to protect our cash flow and enable us to expand our activities. In the long term we would like to find some sponsorship to support trainees and sponsor meetings.

We plan to hire Sue Newband, who has 10 years experience with the BSTP, as administrative support (BSVP Secretariat) to ensure our day-today affairs are more efficient and make the organisation of organise meetings easier and more cost-effective.

We hope to continue to develop the web site.

Regional organisation

We hope a regional structure will grow organically and the role of members is to join in the activities of the BSVP and improve it with their input, ideas and enthusiasm. The aim is to pass on members' knowledge as lecturers & speakers and help to bridge the demographic divide between the older and younger generations. By becoming contributors our members can keep the Society going forward and I exhort every member to propose their own ideas or help to organise a meeting. There will be lots of support and they will gain some useful experience.

Other possibilities include becoming a newsletter editor, helping with the web site, contributing cases/articles for web site or newsletter, offering to become a future Council member, helping to raise sponsorship or organise the annual scientific meetings.

Thanks

My personal thanks go to Ken, Mark and Sionagh for their enthusiastic and selfless support as well as all those other people who have helped us this year, especially our course organisers and lecturers. I also wish to thank all of our members for joining the BSVP and everyone who comes to our meetings.