



MINUTES OF AGM BAHVS HELD ON FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER 2017 AT
WEETWOOD HALL LEEDS

1. Apologies for absence: Mark Elliot: Sonya Leggett: Jack Hoare: Rikke Schultz: Edward De Beukelaer: Nick Thompson

2. Minutes of the last AGM: These were taken as read. Proposed by Lori Leonard and seconded by Peter Gregory

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Election of new members: There were no new members.

5. Election of the new Junior Vice President: Ilse Pedler was proposed by Jane Keogh and seconded by Peter Gregory. All were in favour.

6. President's Address Jane Keogh:

Welcome to our 2017 AGM and the start of what promises to be a great Conference. Before I go any further I'd like to say a big thank you to Sue for organising this weekend - and also Stu for keeping a hand on the helm, Claire for yet again taking on the task of organising sponsorship and Wendy for a tight watch on finances.

So another year for BAHVS and for us all.

I do not think any of you would disagree if I said that I think this has been one of our most challenging years to date. It feels to me as if those that oppose us have mounted their most concerted campaign yet, to destroy homeopathy. They attack us on every front. There is a massive push to stop the NHS providing homeopathy. Every media publication ridicules us, time and again trotting out the old cries of "no evidence", "quackery", "only water", on and on. The Charities Commission is reviewing those charities involved with CAM, and in Europe the European Academics Scientific Advisory Council (EASAC) have produced a statement on Homeopathic products and practices which slates homeopathy and is

intended to provide a scientific basis for Homeopathic medicinal products in the EU.

In our veterinary world Danny Chambers seems to live a charmed existence, writing seriously defamatory articles for Vet Times, The Vet Record and becoming the "go to" veterinary expert for the BBC and various newspapers. The final blow is that he now has a position on RCVS council. I doubt if I am alone in feeling heartily sick of being accused of fraud, cruelty to my patients and delusion by this individual and others. We will no doubt have many discussions on "the way forward" over the next few days, probably well into the early hours.

Let me say at this point that it is not all doom- at the very least we will go down fighting! Our Association has not been idle. Several of us met earlier in the year a couple of times and then continued with phone meetings, to look at a response to the present climate. All of this group have worked hard to contribute to fighting back against the attack that we face. Mark Elliott needs a special mention for his tireless work on our behalf- and has hopefully been persuaded to stay on the committee. Sadly he could not be with us this weekend. He has set up a website- Vets4Informed Choice- as a counter to the various sceptics websites which slate homeopathy with their various half truths and lies. The plan is to print the truth about many of the issues in Veterinary Practice that are lacking in evidence and generally not reported in the public domain. To this end we are going to need input!

If anyone can find a moment to help create content for this website, please do so. Articles on vaccination, early neutering and the like are all needed. This website can be a valuable tool in helping us put the Profession into perspective, and in saving homeopathy and our livelihoods, but it won't happen if we don't take action.

I also need to mention Pete Gregory and his outstanding work for the Faculty as Veterinary Dean, and also for us. He has worked long and hard, at times to the detriment of his health, countering the flack that is aimed at us, liaising with the Faculty on our behalf, and attending meetings such as the open meeting of the VMD. Not to mention his continued work as UK representative of IAVH. I can personally attest to the blood sweat and tears expended on the Association's behalf.

Tim Couzens and Nick Thompson wrote to the RCVS some time ago, complaining about Danny Chambers- not that we have had a response yet. Mark Carpenter, who is sadly for us moving to Germany immanently, has

been involved in correspondence with Vet Times, The Vet Record and the RCVS. I know that we all wish him much happiness and peace in his new life, and hope he keeps coming to Conferences! Geoff Johnson continues to stick his head far above the parapet and I know that we are all deeply grateful for all the work that he does.

On a wider scale, 4H are mounting a strong defence against the NHS England Campaign which aims to stop the NHS providing homeopathy, at present targeting Bristol. They have employed a lawyer to push this forward and are taking the stance of inaccurate action, and stating that this is not a genuine state of consultation.

The HRI continues to push forward the case against the Australian NHMRC report on Homeopathy, now with the ombudsman. Although funding is tight there is a real hope that this particular farce will be exposed and the conclusion overturned. This would be a massive win for us as almost all recent arguments against homeopathy quote the conclusions of this report.

4H is also looking at the Wikipedia entry on Homeopathy and whether we can modify it, and has taken legal advice on the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report on homeopathy- which was back in 2010 but quoted almost daily. At the moment it looks like we will not be able to get it withdrawn, but may well be able to put a statement on the Government website stating the actual conclusion to that meeting rather than the myth. A work in progress!

Ed De Beukelaer and Petra Weiermayer have penned an excellent response to the recent EASAC statement, and 4H are also planning a firm response. HRI have put a statement up on their website and will also be pursuing the matter. Unsurprisingly this paper quotes both the Australian NHMRC report and the House of Commons report in its reference section.

On the subject of 4H, I promise that I will get that article written explaining the history and work of the group. If everyone is in agreement I am happy to continue representing our Association with them for the moment.

Finally I must mention our "quarterly" meetings that I have been trying to organise. We had a very successful meeting in March, and we need to thank the Faculty of Homeopathy for providing a room (and tea and coffee) free of charge. The June meeting was cancelled at short notice as very few people could attend, but a room is booked for Saturday 2nd December and we will be having our Spring meeting there on Saturday 3rd

December- with speakers. The interim meetings are intended to be an opportunity to gather and support each other, bring cases to present or ask advice about, and generally share the companionship of like-minded friends for a day. In reality they can be run as we wish.

My final thoughts to you as President, before I hand over to Chris is that I honestly feel that we can face this present challenge and even win if we stand firm. There will no doubt be much discussion as to whether we attack /act peacefully /work with conventional colleagues to create understanding, acceptance and respect. All options have their merit. Personally I have two comments: First I think that we have to commit funds to this, whether it be paying someone to manage a social media campaign or employing a lawyer to help us combat the sceptics. Secondly we need members to actually come up with the goods- nothing arduous, an article for the "vets4informedchoice" website, a testimonial or two for our website, motivating clients to write to the RCVS or Government. Every year we all agree that these are simple actions with major impact, every year we go home and very little happens. If we all take some personal responsibility, at whatever level, we can move mountains. If we all stay silent then the mountain will crush us.

So now, finally, it is my great pleasure to hand over the Presidential baton to Chris. However, I cannot sit down without thanking Stuart, Wendy and Mark for their support, encouragement and strength throughout these last three years.

Wendy and Stu particularly are responsible for keeping this Association alive and on track, and we owe them an enormous debt of thanks. The work they do is often behind the scenes and unsung, but without them the role of President would be impossible, and I am not sure that we would actually have an Association.

And thank you, the membership, for supporting me these last three years. I know that Chris will take us forward into the future with strength and wisdom, and I am delighted to hand the Presidency into his capable hands.

7. Chris Day accepted the role of president of the association. He hoped that he would be able to live up to the honour and the expectations of the post. He mentioned that it was a far cry from the original figure head of the past and was a much more active role. He said he was looking forward to the challenge and now that his health was much better felt he had the energy to lead from the front.

8.Hon. Secretary's Report Stuart Marston:

Secretaries report 2017

1. Further year of sustained assaults from the anti - brigade as you know. Pete and Jane have done an enormous amount of work along with the faculty 4H and IAVH in defending our corner
2. I don't think the faculty initially realised the degree and personal nature of the attacks against homeopathic vets
3. The RCVS has been most uncooperative and unsupportive of homeopathic vets and the leadership has and is very biased against us
4. Amazingly (or maybe not) Danny Chambers managed to get elected to the RCVS and now Stephen May is President
5. Complaints have been made but with little response from the RCVS
6. Jane and Pete have been instrumental along with Chris Tim and Nick among others in forming a working group 'in defence of homeopathy' .There is also a web site www.vets4informedchoice.org that clients can be directed to promoting homeopathic treatment.
7. It is a total irony that the RCVS, the Vet Times, BSVA and BVA have launched surveys, committees etc. on bullying stress and mental health issues in the profession while allowing and regularly contributing to those of homeopathic and complementary medicine.
8. Still no real clue why the attacks are so sustained and unpleasant
9. Enquires over the year have been slightly less but still 3-4 a month
10. Testimonials are still required but we have now quite a list after the initiative of last conference.
11. Geoff started the cancer treatment trial but that too has been attacked by the antis with the collusion of the RCVS- it would seem that no successful treatment can be due to homeopathy no matter how much evidence is shown or presented
12. The spring meeting was cancelled as you know. The meeting needs to break even at the very least or even make a small profit- we cannot afford a loss nor can we have a speaker make a lot of effort to talk to half a dozen people. It is essential that we have the numbers well in advance so we know it is viable-times are tough! I can only urge members, once more, to commit in advance.

There will be a spring meeting in March and details will be on the website.

13. On that. Jane has instigated a regular meeting at the Faculty of a more informal nature at little cost so keep a look out for those – they can be for just a few people.
14. The mailchimp email needs more copy. Geoff has done sterling work but we can use anything homeopathy related it doesn't have to be cases necessarily. Photos are especially useful. We are reaching about 2400 recipients
15. In conclusion I would say that homeopathy is still very much alive and kicking despite the lies and misinformation being spread out there. One possibly very cheering piece of news is that a large pharmaceutical company has started research into homeopathic medicines. There is the scent of money out there and the wolves of the pharmaceutical companies cannot resist it. Maybe there is a chink developing in the wall.

I wish you all a great conference .

9. Hon Treasurers Report. Wendy McCrandles:

Treasurer Report **BAHVS September 2017**

Currently have a healthy cushion in bank account circa £20K
P/L accounts are available for membership if wanted

Last couple of years have seen conference making a small profit but only due to excellent sponsorship. Without sponsors conference would always run at an unsustainable loss primarily due to lack of numbers

Main cost out with the conference is magazine and perhaps once again we need to revisit the costs of having a glossy magazine as opposed to a newsletter as membership numbers decline?

Membership numbers are as follows

2017 MEMBERSHIP FOR BAHVS

Honorary members 3

Student members	9
Retired member	1
Full membership UK	42
EU	5
Rest of World	8
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>68</u>

The problem is dwindling UK members and student numbers, although lovely to have them, are unfortunately not UK based

On the brighter side BAHVS have agreed to fund Geoff's cancer project to the sum of £3K to match funding already agreed by Scottish Homeopathic Education Trust (SHRET)

Financially the immediate future is bright and I suggest we need a discussion on project funding and bursaries However we cannot rely on the same sponsors to help us out all the time. As they see fewer numbers attending it makes little commercial sense for them to continue to support us.

Longterm unless numbers improve the organisation will need a radical overhaul and may have fewer large conferences but possibly more day meetings around the country In my opinion the committee needs to start looking at future planning

10. IAVS Report Edward De Beukelaer

11. Faculty Report Peter Gregory: Peter reported that there were three new VetMFHoms. He said he was appointed primarily under the educational remit. He thought that there should be another veterinary surgeon on the faculty council. Anne Fey O'Reilly was the veterinary faculty representative at the moment. He requested that anyone who felt they could take on the role contact him.

He had been to the VMD meeting which had proved constructive and that nothing had happened as far as homeopathy was concerned and according to the information he received any action on homeopathic medicines was unlikely in the foreseeable future. He had been on

workshops re Brexit and anyone can register as a stakeholder to be involved in the decision making process.

John Saxton commented that being a faculty council member and dean required the picking up of many threads and could not be reasonably done without an 'apprenticeship'.

12. Conference 2018 Geoff Johnson would be organizing with help from Peter. The conference would be held with the faculty conference at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Liverpool from October 11th to the 14th 2018. It was likely that the veterinary topics would cover a quarter of the main stage with a half day in a breakout room. He needed some ideas for topics. There would be a band Saturday night and the cost would be £335.00 .He needed some sponsorship and the BAHVS AGM would likely be on the Sunday. The cost was quite high but there was a possibility of some bursaries yet to be sorted out.

13. Conference 2019 Wendy McCrandles. Wendy will be the main organiser and it will be held at Sterling University Campus with accommodation in the student residences. It was likely to be in June after the students had gone down for the summer. The date decided by the meeting was June 14th -16th 2019. Further details will be posted as and when.

14. AOB. Geoff Johnson proposed some ideas for promoting veterinary homeopathy and 'fighting back' against all the negative publicity. The employment of an investigator and/or a lawyer on a regular basis to counter the anti -narrative. The cost was the prohibitive thing for this but Tim Couzens said he might have a source that would be willing to consider 'donating to the cause'. Tim would pursue this on the association's behalf

Both Sue and Wendy said that their waiting lists were longer than ever which boded well. Wendy also said that as Danny Chambers's efforts were being stifled he was now looking to go down the welfare act route. She thought this might be an error on his part as he was doing this under the auspices of a charity which might see him and the charity breaking the law.

A discussion was had on collecting data from clients attending our clinics by asking them to fill in a short survey at the time. Ilse offered to take on the task of doing this and hoped to get it to the members soon once the committee had approved it.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm.