

BRITISH SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the BSAVA (Ltd) was held at the BSAVA, Woodrow House, 1 Telford Way, 1 Woodrow Way, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AB, on Thursday 15th June 2023 at 9.30 pm.

23.01 Chair's Introduction

Dr Speakman welcomed everyone to the meeting, both those physically in the room and those who had joined virtually, she declared the meeting open. Dr Speakman advised virtual attendees to vote using the raised hands option and that she would let them know when any votes had been counted.

23.02 Apologies for absence

Dr Arnold informed the Annual General Meeting that apologies had been received from:

Mrs L Turner, Mr M Jessop, Dr S Paterson, Mrs L Hill, Mr R Harvey, Miss S Sorrell, Mr R Dixon, Mr S Spill, Mrs L Hill, Dr N Bexfield, Mr Grant Petrie, Mr J Chitty, Prof M Herrtage, Prof N Gorman, Prof P Bedford, Dr P Lhermette, Mr R Green, Mr A Bradley, Dr Janet Littlewood, Miss E Groves, and Mr D Thompson.

23.03 Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting

Dr Speakman proposed that the Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Association held on Wednesday 18th May 2022, at 9.30 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

23.04 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

23.05 Presidents Reflection

Members of the association, colleagues, and distinguished guests,

It feels somewhat surreal to be stood here in the same spot as I did last year but this time on my "last" as opposed to "first" day as President of the association.

Once again, this has been a rollercoaster year of challenges and achievements for BSAVA and the profession. In the wake of the COVID and Brexit chaos and the ongoing devastating war in Ukraine, a new surge of social and economic challenges with costs of living soaring is impacting the profession, pet-owning public and indeed the country as a whole.

However difficult the landscape, we are proud of the way that BSAVA has risen to these recent global challenges and changes, some of which have had positive aspects. Who knew a few years ago that we would all be "Zooming" as a matter of course(!), allowing us to meet in a more cost-effective manner in terms of time, environment, and finance.

The board recognizes the accelerated change in both the world and profession and as we move into a new strategic planning cycle, we have seized the opportunity to engage in an in-depth review and planning process. Since February, with the aid of Consorticon/Group Partners we

have been gathering insight, reviewing, and planning a strategy that will take us forward strongly, ensuring that BSAVA provides unrivalled support to our members from an educational, scientific, professional and community perspective. This included a fabulous three-day “structured visual thinking workshop” engaging members, volunteers and external stakeholders exploring how we ensure that we meet the needs of the small animal profession of the future. We are all looking forward to the final output and implementation phase.

Once again in March we hosted our annual Congress in Manchester and for the first time since 2019 were able to experience a year unaffected by restrictions. Over the three days almost 4000 delegates enjoyed unrivalled top-quality education and panel discussions, a brand-new practical village, the hugely appreciated wellbeing zone, an exhibition that buzzed with delegate activity and great opportunities to network and relax with peers. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Sarah Fitzpatrick and staff for their immense hard work and to all the Congress Committee for an enormous effort in creating the outstanding programme. Particular thanks to Paul Higgs as he finishes his term as Chair of Congress Committee whose leadership and outstanding contribution is hugely appreciated. Feedback from exhibitors and delegates was overwhelmingly positive and BSAVA Congress continues to deliver a first-class event for learning and networking with colleagues from industry and the veterinary profession at large. We look forward to seeing you all in Manchester 21-23 March 2024!

Vetbytes is a continually updated point of care resource to support small animal vets and nurses to practice evidence-based medicine. Following a successful partnership agreement with Vet2VetLtd offering members discounted subscriptions to Vetbytes, board recognized that there is great potential in this product which fits closely with BSAVA charitable aims. Following detailed due diligence, BSAVA have become a 20% shareholder of the parent company Vet2Vet Ltd. The partnership was officially launched at BSAVA Congress 2023, and we look forward to the Nurse app being finalized and released in 2024. It is free for all BSAVA student members, 33% off for BSAVA members, 6 months free for newly qualified vets, and once launched in 2024 the nurse app will be free for nurse BSAVA members. A welcome addition to our portfolio of membership benefits.

For the first time in three years, the presidential year has been free of travel restrictions and allowed me to represent the association at a wide range of events. My year started with a trip to Prague for the annual FECAVA conference where I had the opportunity to network and learn from some of our European counterparts, attend the lecture program and to welcome a group of delegates from the Ukraine whom BSAVA had funded travel and accommodation for. This was one of the most humbling experiences of my life. To hear devastating stories of trying to continue the role of a veterinary surgeon and general life in neighborhoods bombarded by the horrors of war, loss of friends and relatives and the constant fear was heartbreaking to hear and puts our own issues into perspective. As this shocking war continues our Ukrainian colleagues remain in our thoughts and board have continued complimentary overseas membership for a further year to them and all veterinary refugees to ensure they have access to resources.

I have also enjoyed the hospitality of many of our fellow associations at their annual conferences. Alongside our regular joint officer meetings these are great opportunities for us to collaborate and work together for the benefit of the profession and I am grateful for the opportunities and friendships that these relationships bring.

It is fair to say that attending WSAVA Congress in Lima in October was a wonderful experience, ably chaperoned by past-president Mark Johnston. We attended the WSAVA general assembly and contributed to seminars on inequity in global medicine and shaping the future of veterinary medicine. BSAVA is an active contributor to WSAVA and WSAVA Foundation and engages and supports many global initiatives increasing access to veterinary education and resources around the world.

I have had the pleasure of attending many UK based veterinary events, in particular our own BSAVA Vets Cymru in Aberystwyth and BSAVA Alba in Falkirk. For those of you who enjoy a good ceilidh alongside excellent lectures and exhibition, I can thoroughly recommend! Earlier in the year I was also able to engage with our fantastic regional committees around the country at their annual regional meetings, whilst some were virtual, I was lucky to be able to visit many of them in person. Our regions have been able to return to in-person meetings this year and it is important that we support our regional committees as a vital base of supportive peer community and education. Thank you to all our regional volunteers who dedicate their time to this important role of the association.

We are all mindful that the profession continues to face issues such as mental health concerns and burnout. Although innovations such as virtual meetings are a positive in many respects, we mustn't forget the need to balance this and a busy work life with the ability to maintain a sense of community, and social interactions for ourselves that can be unwittingly sacrificed. We are proud to have supported the Mind Matters Initiative this year in offering Mental Health first aider training free of charge to BSAVA student representatives to ensure that every vet school has a mental health first aider on the student team to support and signpost peers. Our wellbeing zone at Congress more than doubled this year and has received phenomenal feedback. It is essential that equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) is an integral part of the veterinary profession and last year we have created our EDI working group to ensure we can assist in evaluating and supporting environments where every member of staff and veterinary professional can thrive.

There is not time here to do justice to all our achievements in the various areas of the association this year, but our Honorary Secretary will provide further details in her report and the annual report has additional detail. It is worthy of note here that in addition to the Policy work detailed elsewhere, our Head of Policy and Communications Adrienne Conroy has played a vital role in communicating issues of significant importance to our members and the small animal veterinary profession during the year. Just a small selection as examples include collaboration with BVA and BVZS in producing a position statement and resources on the "Responsible use of parasiticides for cats and dogs" and updated guidance on Avian Influenza for practices. As we speak, we have ongoing discussions on canine fertility clinics and guidance on *Brucella canis*. I am very grateful to Emi Barker and Scientific Committee for producing our excellent scientific information document on *Brucella canis* which is already being widely used as a reference point across the profession. As our Chair of Scientific Committee Ian Self finishes his term.

We have three other committee chairs who we say goodbye to this year: Ian Mason Chair of Council has had the challenging role of guiding Council through the lockdown years, and we very much appreciate your efforts. Andrew Ash completes his term as Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and Beckie Smith, Chair of Regions also finishes her term. We thank you all for your dedication and time given to your roles for the association.

It's fair to say I owe several more thank yous! To Amanda Stranack, our CEO, for her diligent leadership and management and my fellow board members for their steadfast support and encouragement. I would also like to thank the leadership team and all the staff for their resolute hard work and patience. To all the past-presidents, committee chairs and volunteers I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with during the year who are so passionate and give so much to the association. I thank you all. As I take up the role of Senior Vice President, it does sadly mean that we say goodbye to Sheldon Middleton after 7 years on board and many previous years of dedicated volunteering on a wide range of committees. He has been a strong and calm presence on board and the association has benefitted greatly from your input Sheldon. Both personally and on behalf of the association a huge thank you.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and understanding during my lengthy BSAVA journey and in particular this year.

Of course, an enormous thank you to all our members without whom BSAVA wouldn't be able to provide the world-respected education, publications, Congress, science, and research output that makes the association as special as it is.

I feel a huge sense of pride and humility at having been entrusted with the role of President this year. I want to express my gratitude to everyone for believing in me and allowing me to spend the year working alongside amazing professional colleagues. We have made great progress this year in all areas of the association and made exciting inroads into our future strategic direction. There is, however, much to do and undoubtedly new challenges along the way. I am reassured that as the reins pass over to Carl, his calm, knowledgeable and passionate drive for the association will continue to take us successfully forwards. I look forward to working with you and the rest of the association in the coming year strengthening the knowledge and community within the small animal veterinary profession and creating a brighter future for the health and welfare of the animals in our care.

It has been an honor and a privilege, thank you.

23.06 Honorary Secretary Speech

President, Members of the Association, honoured and distinguished guests.

As I conclude my second year as Honorary Secretary, I would like to start this report by thanking my colleagues on Board, our professional staff team at Woodrow House for their dedication and cooperation, and the many volunteers who devote their time and energy to a variety of projects. Our association is privileged to have over 300 volunteers who give their time to BSAVA with goodwill and passion.

The past year has again brought major challenges but together we have resolved these with skill, knowledge, organization, and some humour.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 the veterinary profession reacted quickly in finding effective ways to support our Ukrainian colleagues. BSAVA was able to contribute to the support in activities that relate to our charitable objective, namely supporting the veterinary profession through education. Examples were the provision of free access to the BSAVA Congress on Demand recordings, free BSAVA overseas membership and funding of accommodation and travel for 46 Ukrainian vets (based in Ukraine and Refugees) to attend FECAVA Congress in Prague, to enjoy the support of the veterinary community.

Structure, Governance and Management

There have been no changes in the association's governance or management structures in 2022.

The impact of the governance changes implemented 4 years ago is still monitored to ensure that the effect on the operations of the Association remains a positive one.

Under the leadership of Ian Mason, Council continued to explore ways to ensure their contribution is optimised in the new structure. This will remain a focus for the coming year.

Membership

BSAVA members make up its community and are one of the pillars of its strategy. In 2022, the organization faced challenges as some membership categories experienced small gains while others declined. By the end of 2022 there were 10,631 active members compared to 11,391 active members in December 2021. Feedback from the member care campaign highlighted that the cost of living and departures from the profession were major factors in these results.

But a number of actions have been undertaken to address these challenges.

The transition to a new central database was completed, promising improved management of memberships and reporting, as well as better understanding of member engagement for future product development.

The Journey Mapping phase of the Membership Matters project was finished, and recommendations have been identified for implementation in 2023.

The new Student Plus membership includes a one-off £15 payment for a printed formulary. Campaigning for this new membership category will continue in 2023, targeting veterinary students across the UK.

Policy

In 2022, the BSAVA Policy & Communications Department actively engaged in national consultations and policy development, collaborating with stakeholders such as the government, RCVS, and other veterinary organisations.

The department is supported by the Policy Working Committees, made up of BSAVA staff and volunteers, who contribute invaluable expertise, knowledge of life in practice and an understanding of members' needs.

Through Policy BSAVA contributed to a range of consultations, calls for evidence and requests for input on veterinary issues including topics like veterinary out of hours cover, veterinary nursing competencies, licensing of activities involving animals, veterinary medicine regulations and antimicrobial resistance.

During the Ukraine crisis, the department assisted in facilitating the movement of pets to the UK while addressing rabies concerns. Policy also supported efforts to manage crises such as the salmonella outbreak in rodent feed, monkey pox outbreak, and avian influenza.

The department maintained strong relationships and collaboration with other veterinary organisations and participated in working groups to provide guidance and updates to veterinary practitioners.

Despite the disruption posed by the COVID pandemic, the BSAVA's collaboration with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) successfully established the Small Animal Expert Group, contributing to animal health and welfare, disease surveillance, and international trade.

Looking ahead to 2023, BSAVA Policy & Communications aims to continue advocating for the veterinary profession and enhancing animal health and welfare.

Education

Leading-edge education remains one of the pillars of BSAVA's strategy. The education department is supported by the Education Working Committee, led by Stephanie Sorrell.

The Education department has produced and delivered its high-quality Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and qualifications and returned to pre-pandemic in-person teaching. Popular initiatives developed during the pandemic were made permanent, such as the successful Learn Online short courses and Vet Nurse Merit Awards.

Online expert-led discussions called 'Clinical Rounds' and Learn@Lunch webinars were well-received by members. The PG Certificate courses, including the new Small Animal Diagnostic Imaging award, remained fully subscribed. The MSc in Clinical Veterinary Research welcomed new students, and five MSc students presented at Congress 2023.

Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee is led by Ian Self.

In 2022, several initiatives were undertaken to promote science and enhance BSAVA's scientific output. Monthly press releases and scientific e-newsletters were issued to highlight articles published in JSAP and share relevant news for general practice.

A collaborative effort between external experts, the Scientific Committee, Policy team, and Publications team resulted in the creation of BSAVA's Scientific Information Document (SID) on *Brucella canis*. This document offers accessible information to veterinary staff in small animal practice regarding the increasing risk of diseases with zoonotic potential brought by imported companion animals. It became the most viewed article in the library, with 3,483 full-text accesses in the first quarter of 2023.

Throughout the year, the Scientific Committee reviewed and endorsed Scientific Position Statements on various topics and also endorsed the ISFM Behavioural Guidelines.

PetSavers

The PetSavers Management Committee is led by Rosie Godfrey.

The PetSavers Old Age Pets project undertaken at the University of Liverpool has developed a checklist for owners to assess the health and wellbeing of senior and geriatric dogs. It was successfully launched at this year's BSAVA Congress as part of the Ageing Canine Toolkit. The project's master's student completed her thesis and passed her viva.

The PetSavers alumni group was launched to create a research community and ambassadors, offering free membership to past grant holders, committee members, and others.

Several grants were awarded for research projects at various universities, and Professor Ross Bond received the PetSavers Veterinary Achievement Award 2022 for his paper on skin biopsy specimens in alopecic dogs.

Publications

The publication department is supported by the Publications Working Committee, led by Nick Bexfield.

Compared to the record-breaking book sales in 2021, there was an expected decline in printed book sales for BSAVA in 2022. However, there was a 19% increase in sales of digital content, including from the BSAVA Library, which partially offset the decrease in printed book sales.

BSAVA published the BSAVA Manual of Practical Veterinary Welfare, along with new and updated chapters in the online BSAVA Guide to Nutrition, client leaflets on procedures, and updates to the BSAVA Guide to the Use of Veterinary Medicines. BSAVA invested in developing the BSAVA Library, introducing a video library, redesigning the home page, and improving the search function.

Companion, the monthly membership publication, focused on providing engaging CPD and news, with additional content on well-being and mental health.

The Journal of Small Animal Practice (JSAP) experienced a 25% drop in article submissions compared to 2021, but efforts will be made to understand the causes and explore initiatives to increase submissions. The JSAP's impact factor reached its highest level of 1.669 in 2022.

Regions – Community

The 12 regions of BSAVA form part of our strong community, another pillar of BSAVA's strategy. Rebecca Smith has been the Chair of Regions, providing a link between the regions and Woodrow House.

Regional CPD programs, organised by our regional volunteers, were reintroduced alongside the online Regions Now program, with innovative formats.

Both regional two-day events, Vets Cymru and BSAVA Alba, successfully took place, offering inspiring CPD for vets and nurses. The Regional Committee structure demonstrated resilience in delivering accessible local CPD despite the challenges faced by volunteers.

Internationally BSAVA strives to ensure that the veterinary community works together wherever they may be located and is represented and heard on various international veterinary bodies.

Sustainability

BSAVA prioritises environmental responsibility through its Sustainability Working Group (SWG) and initiatives across all departments. We are proud that in 2022, BSAVA earned the Bronze Award from Investors in the Environment for their commitment to sustainability and carbon footprint reduction.

They aim to achieve silver status and conduct a full carbon audit for 2022. BSAVA is dedicated to becoming carbon neutral, including their annual Congress.

The association actively seeks partnerships with other organisations to promote green practices. They collaborate with Vet Sustain and offer BSAVA members a discount for a veterinary-specific carbon calculator. BSAVA have reduced the environmental impact of publishing by printing 40% fewer pages in 2022, utilizing UK printing and carbon-balanced paper. JSAP printing will be relocated to the UK, further reducing the carbon footprint for members who prefer the print format.

In proposing the adoption of my report, I would like once again to register my thanks to all staff and volunteers of BSAVA for their hard work, and to BSAVA members and external related associations and stakeholders for their continued support of this association.

23.07 Honorary Treasurers Report

President, Members of the Association, honoured and distinguished guests.

The financial year to 31 December 2022 (FY22) saw the Association face some significant operational challenges with initial teething problems associated with the introduction of a new CRM system. These issues caused a delay in the completion of the year-end accounts and, therefore, once again, the audit process. Nevertheless, the Finance team demonstrated enormous diligence, and fortitude, to overcome those difficulties and completed the audit process with a clean bill of health from our auditors Sayer Vincent. I should take the opportunity to acknowledge Sayer Vincent who were understanding to say the least about the delays in producing the accounts, and with whom we have had a good working relationship for 10 years. However, after 10 years using them, it is considered good practice to change auditors and following a tender process, Board has recently decided to recommend to the members that we appoint WR Partners as our new auditors.

The audited Association accounts for the financial year ending December 2022 disclose an operating deficit of £452K. (see table overleaf) and year end cash holdings of £965K.

Losses from our investment portfolio (managed by RBC Brewin Dolphin) amounted to £1.05m, a reversal from the £1.532m gain achieved during the prior year and a figure which worsened our overall deficit to £1.503m.

These results were an indication of the need for the Association to review its offering and its position within the veterinary sector and recognition of this has prompted positive action from the Board of Trustees to engage Consorticon to provide external expertise and insight into the programme of change to revitalise the BSAVA.

The Association is fortunate to retain significant Reserves to protect against the deficit in 2022 and the likely deficit during 2023 as we work through the Programme of Change. Of the total Reserve of £12.876m, £1.147m is restricted for PetSavers while a further £4.176m is designated by the Board of Trustees for various projects, including the Programme of Change, the on-going replacement and upgrade of assets and the continuing work in the area of digitalization. This leaves “free” reserves of £7.553m which will allow the Association to continue to operate in an uncertain environment and to weather any changes over the next few years.

The Association budget for 2023 reflected our opinion that the business environment would remain challenging and would result in an operating deficit of approx. £661K.

The result to the end of April 2023 is an operating deficit of £350K against our budget projection for the same period of £457K and while there is some time to go before the end of the year, we are working hard to maximise revenue and minimise expenses for the remainder of 2023.

Since January 2023, our investment portfolio has made significant gains, rebounding from the losses incurred during 2022 and to the end of April has risen by £436K. Global market volatility continues to impact on our investment portfolio, but, as always, it is important to remember that the management of this portfolio should be viewed in the long term. And on that basis

It remains only to express my gratitude to Anthony Welsh, and Donna Reynolds in the Finance team who have made sterling efforts to overcome the problems of recent times. Having finally managed to get to grips with the vagaries of the new CRM and the difficulties encountered in it communicating with our accounting software, Anthony is now revising aspects of our financial reporting and forecasting which should help keep the board best informed through these difficult times.

Dr Speakman proposed the adoption of the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurers reports “en bloc” and asked for a seconder.

Secunder: Mr P H Locke
For: All
Carried unanimously

23.08 Election of Board Members for 2022-2023

Dr Speakman said: “The following nominations have been received for the election of Officers of the for the Association year 2022 - 2023:

President	Mr C Gorman
Senior Vice President	Dr A J Speakman
Vice President	Mr J Hoad
Junior Vice President	Mr D Godfrey
Honorary Treasurer	Mr J Hughes
Honorary Secretary	Dr K Arnold
Officer without Portfolio	Mr P Graham
Non-Executive Director	Mr S Spill
CEO/Trustee	Mrs A Walton (aka Miss A Stranack)

Dr Speakman asked if there were any other nominations, there were none, Dr Speakman therefore asked for a Proposer and Secunder for the nominations.

Proposer: Prof S Dawson
Secunder: Dr F Scott-Park
For: All
Carried unanimously

23.09 Appointment of Representative on BVA Council

Dr Speakman advised that the BSAVA Representative on BVA Council will be Mr C Gorman.

22.10 Appointment of Auditors for 2023 - 2024

Mr Hughes said: "Following consideration, the recommendation of the Board is that the Association should appoint as its Auditors W R Partners, for the forthcoming financial year."

Dr Speakman asked for a Secunder for the appointment of auditors for 2023 -2024.

**Secunder: Mr M R Johnston
For All
Carried unanimously**

23.11 Induction of New President

Dr Speakman informed the meeting that Carl qualified from Bristol in 1985 worked in Swindon, Portsmouth, and Cheshire before taking on the Falkland Vet Clinic in 1989. He became small animal editor for UK Vet Companion Animal in 2000 and remains as consultant editor. Carl has also been series editor for the Pocket Practice series of non-clinical veterinary texts, writing 'Clients, Pets and Vets' on client management and communication. His BSAVA journey started on Southern Region committee becoming secretary, then was a regional rep for three years before joining Board as Hon Sec. Carl has also been on Scientific, Education and Publications committees. I am reassured that as the reins pass over to Carl, his calm, knowledgeable and passionate drive for the association will continue to take us successfully forwards.

Thank you, Alison, for your introduction.

Members of the association, friends, colleagues, it is a humbling thing to be asked to take on the presidency of an association as important to our professional world as the British Small Animal Veterinary Association. I think all new presidents must stand on this day with a mix of humility, excitement, trepidation and perhaps disbelief. I joined the association as a student, and so find that I have been a member for 40 years. From the first days I valued the association for its scientific output, its local and central CPD and of course, Congress. That I would come to be entrusted with leadership of the BSAVA never entered my mind.

Having said that, I knew in a way that I was destined for great things in the association because, having just qualified, I received a letter, in a BSAVA envelope, from a certain Caroline Bower. She introduced herself as secretary of BSAVA's South West regional committee and asked if I would speak for them on the latest developments in cancer care. Sadly, after my honest answer that I would be delighted to accept, but that I probably had limited information to share on the subject, I didn't get my first booking as a speaker, but I was honoured to be mistaken for an illustrious namesake, and equally honoured now to be following Professor Gorman's footsteps as president of the association. It was my first chance to understand how BSAVA functions and how volunteers are at the heart of the organisation.

I recently took over as Chair of our local sports club. In persuading me to take the role, the outgoing chair assured me that the job mainly involves thanking people and sitting back. I have to say that no-one has given me that assurance about leading the BSAVA team (and to be honest I'm not sure that the sports club Chair wasn't being liberal with the truth). I do fully understand however that I and BSAVA do owe huge debts of gratitude to many people. Since joining Board as Honorary Secretary we have lived through interesting times. We always say that the veterinary world changes at a pace, but my word, we have seen changes in the last few years that few of us would have predicted to have happened as fast as they have. The profession was already coming to terms with the rise of corporate practice, the consolidation of

many of the pharma firms that we were familiar with, the changing make up and aspirations of our vets and nurses. To then be confronted with Brexit and a global pandemic could be seen as unfair.

It is to all our credit – staff and volunteers – that we have met those challenges and shown resilience and innovation. As Mario Andretti said: ‘ If everything seems under control, you’re not going fast enough’. BSAVA has always been at the forefront of veterinary cpd, publications and events. I am in no way belittling the visionary achievements of our predecessors when I say that it is harder in our times to stand out from the crowd. We have most definitely been flattered by imitation, and we recognise that many of our colleagues in education and events are doing great things. We still should strive to be the standard bearers and pioneers. For this reason, we have, under the leadership of Alison Speakman, embarked on what will be a far-reaching Program of Change. Much of my year as president will involve helping BSAVA to implement the recommendations that we develop. In doing so I would like to emphasise the community aspect of BSAVA, to ensure we are mutually supportive as a profession. It is also important to me that we continue our focus on sustainability, being fully involved in initiatives, such as carbon auditing Congress and ensuring our publishing business has minimal environmental impact. More than anything I want us to help ensure that vets enjoy their working life. I still feel privileged every day to be a member of a profession which allows me to be a friend to numerous pets and their owners, to help them make the most of their lives and to ease their passage when they leave.

I have been happy to serve on a Board of talented, hardworking, and dedicated professionals. I would like to thank Alison for her leadership and her championing of wellbeing, which is so important for us all. She has been a calm and sympathetic presence. Thanks also to Amanda Stranack and her fantastic staff who share our passion for BSAVA and are valuable friends to the volunteers. Of course, I also have to give huge thanks to our large body of over 350 volunteers who make BSAVA what it is. Whether serving on regional committees or working committees, or supporting the association in many ways, volunteers are our life blood. Volunteering, whether it be for an organisation like ours or for smaller local charities, brings many rewards whether learning new skills, or developing a network of colleagues or just the knowledge that we are giving back to our community. I would encourage employers to recognise this and promote volunteering to their staff. On that note I must thank CVS for enabling me to take on this role and supporting me in the time I have given to BSAVA.

We welcome David Godfrey back to Board, having served as Honorary Treasurer, and now re-joining as Junior Vice President. Thank you to Ian Mason who leaves his role as the first independent Chair of Council, a role so large that it will now be shared by two Past Presidents and stalwarts of the BSAVA, Freda Scott Park and Ian Ramsey. I think I can safely say that they will be keeping Council busy and Board on its toes. We look forward to working with you.

Peter Higgins becomes Chair of our Audit and Risk committee. Peter is an experienced vet who brings a wealth of experience at board level from the veterinary, university, and sporting worlds. We welcome Andy Green as Chair of Congress committee. Andy led the program for our virtual congress in 2021. He will bring enthusiasm and good humour to the role. Rachel Casey is now Chair of Scientific committee and Ian Self is moving to become vice Chair of the Education

committee. Matthew Erskine becomes Chair of Regions. Thank you all for your commitment and time and enthusiasm. I look forward to working with you.

Finally, thank you all for putting your trust in me. You know it's a safe bet because you are not backing a single person, but a talented team who are determined to keep BSAVA at the heart of small animal practice. Bill Clinton once said, 'Being President is like running a cemetery – you have a lot of people under you but no-one is listening'. Thank you for listening and we look forward to an exciting year.

23.12 Date, time, and venue of the next Annual General Meeting

The next Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday 20th June 2024 at Woodrow House, time will be advised closer to the date. There being no other business the meeting concluded.