

**Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the Sheep  
Veterinary Society  
Zoom Meeting  
Wednesday 3 Nov 2021**

The meeting convened at 12h00.

Minutes kept by R Reichel, Secretary

**Present:** Rebecca Mearns, Amanda Carson, Rudolf Reichel, Amy Jennings, Shona Mouncey, Tricia Sutton, Ed Hill, Hazel Rice, Jonathan Hobbs, David Wilson, Miranda Timmerman,

**Apologies:** Phillipa Page, Rachel Forster, Clare Phythian, Kevin Harrison

**Topics discussed**

1. **Conference – feedback on Cheltenham conference**, costs, CPD provision and future plans

RM. A success by 2 measures – if measured on feedback and also covered its costs (and made a profit). Now we need to make sure future conferences / CPD events do the same. The money from the international in 2017 has been a buffer but we basically need membership to cover secretariat, printing, website, expenses associated with representing SVS at various meetings, and conference income needs to cover all associated costs including proceedings, speakers T&S. This is the model going forward and needs to be considered throughout planning of these events.

RM. Some negative feedback – highlands and islands vets welcomed web based CPD during Covid and would like more. This also fits with sustainability and so we should consider from 2023 (we have legacy booking for Belfast in 2022) doing one virtual conference in spring and face to face conference in autumn. We are not the only source of sheep CPD so this may increase attendance and improve viability.

RM. We already made some changes to reduce costs (Sunday evening committee meeting and accommodation paid for; aim to get more local speakers to reduce T&S...) and we just need to bear in mind location / venue / maximising local vets attending for future conferences.

Members agree that the current conference fee is appropriate.

Comments below from Phillipa below (1 – 8):

1. I have found the tie microphone! It was in Ben's tuxedo pocket!

2. Thanks to all who helped with the Cheltenham conference, I think it went well.
3. For future conferences it would be great to have a local ish committee member to help with suitability for accommodation, and the farm visits. As an assistant organiser to the conference? I think Moyna we are working together again for Belfast! Shona as local rep for Penrith Autumn 2022 conference
4. The farm visit was really well received and I think the visits are definitely worth putting effort into getting a good one organised etc.
5. I was a bit rubbish in organising chairpersons to help, so a big thanks to Nick and others for doing a great job. I realised that as organiser you literally only have time to 'organise'. Get chair added to the programme template so it is not overlooked **AP Hazel**
6. I would personally continue with the mix of scientific content, industry topics and vet wellbeing. But happy to be guided otherwise.
7. I think also very useful to have a local farmer/shepherd and their vet to present a case as it prompts variation and discussion, but again happy to be guided.
8. Topics – I'm always a bit nervous of missing an absolute specialist on a subject! So please email me if you think I should definitely include someone, or if you see a speaker and think...would be better suited. I really won't mind.

Discussion on planning for future meetings

Shona has agreed to be local conference contact for Penrith, Autumn2022.

Agreed to have one physical and one virtual meeting a year from 2023 and then review how it works after 2024. (2023 will have an international meeting, so will have only one local SVS meeting).

**AP – RM** will put this decision in the next communication to members.

## 2. Skills audit

RM. Thanks to those who have responded – we have so much talent and enthusiasm. I really want the committee to be more involved (partly because I have insufficient time myself). I've identified a few new areas – social media and sustainability – and I'm reviewing the working groups to align them to all the different groups we have representatives on to spread the load and the interest. My plan is to approach individuals for the various areas once I have got my head around it all.

AC. The initial idea was to have each group chaired by a committee member who can then provide feedback at committee meetings.

**AP – Hazel.** Send a reminder to members to inform the committee if they are a representative on a group

RM. The plan is to have committee meetings every 6-8 weeks to keep everyone up to date as there is so much going on at the moment.

3. **BVA response to Defra labelling for animal welfare**; call for evidence. Deadline 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/>

[https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/supporting\\_documents/Call%20For%20Evidence%20document%20%20Labelling%20for%20Animal%20Welfare.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/supporting_documents/Call%20For%20Evidence%20document%20%20Labelling%20for%20Animal%20Welfare.pdf)

Given the recent NZ trade deal and earlier Australia deal it seems labelling is the Government's way out by passing the buck to consumers to choose British.

Quote: "in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. I want us to ensure that consumers are able to differentiate between products that meet or exceed the UK's high welfare standards and those that do not."

Is this fair on consumers or farmers? Price and the value-action gap. Consumers claim they want high welfare produce but purchasing decisions don't back this up!

We need simple and positive labelling that is easily understood. For cuts and for products containing. Welfare differences less clear cut for sheep than for say layers / meat poultry in terms of production methods / times to finish etc.

Just a few ideas - Wholly off grass / housed to finish BUT are we saying these differ in welfare standard? I don't think so. Whole life assured? But stratified sheep industry means some sell as stores and that's the right decision rather than overcrowded or soggy pasture etc.

What the call is asking for:

Evidence on potential impacts on businesses, and also on the effectiveness of labelling at influencing farmer, business, and consumer behaviour. It can be in the form of statistical data, case studies, literature reviews, personal experiences, reports, and documents, whether new or historic. Wherever possible, please provide full references.

What do we have currently in red meat and lamb sector – red tractor, origin, organic (doesn't equate with better welfare but may chime with consumers on issues around sustainability)

Re the label examples given – what evidence is there that they are understood and inform purchasing?

Any volunteers for this task? -envisage consideration of the questions and seeking opinion of members local to you (we will get it on the SVS website and tweet also) and then working with me to collate a response from SVS to give both to BVA and to the consultation direct. Also encourage individuals to contribute to the call via the on line portal. May have quick zoom if necessary before the 06 Dec21 deadline only if necessary as should be able to do via e mail.

Volunteers: David, Ed, Amanda, Amy and Rebecca

**AP – RM** to pass draft comments to all committee members prior to submitting

4. **AOB** and approx. date for next meeting (w/c 13Dec?)

**RM. Article on the eMedHub** for UK Vet Livestock magazine: e mail from Fiona following meeting if AHDB medicine hub liaison group last week. 1200 word opinion piece on the Medicine Hub – see below. Could we look to split this between a cattle vet and a sheep vet? Vets who are engaging with the Hub and explaining how they found it? This content could double up as case studies for vets to access at the end of their ‘user journeys’ once the Hub gets that functionality? Could we leave it with BCVA and SVS/NSA to progress together?

**No committee member could volunteer as no one has started using it. Feedback should be provided that an APP would have been a better option.**

**AP RM** to feedback to FL re no volunteer found but mention possibility that farms with Tesco contracts may be using it given they are required to for cattle

**RM. RoSA webinar for CPD event organisers** – Rachel tried to attend but there were technical difficulties. There is a 40 min (ish) you tube recording and I think ideally committee members involved in conference / CPD organising may want to watch it. I haven’t watched it yet but will and can circulate a summary. Link below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtv1QE1oMew>

**AP RM** provide summary of RoSA webinar

**New members approved:**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed By</u></b>	<b><u>Seconded By</u></b>
<b><i>Full/Associate/Student Member</i></b>		
Annabelle Wheeler	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Hannah Childs	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Daisy Hawkins	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Laura Huntenburg	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Aine O’Brien	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Esther Nelson	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Catherine Macleod	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson
Oliver Sheldon	Rebecca Mearns	Amanda Carson

Jenny Harrison  
Mohammadreza Mokhtari Hooyeh  
Sarah O'Reilly  
Bhavisha Patel

Rebecca Mearns  
Rebecca Mearns  
Rebecca Mearns  
Rebecca Mearns

Amanda Carson  
Amanda Carson  
Amanda Carson  
Amanda Carson

**AC. Welfare pathway data capture** – feedback. I attended a BVA Sector Group meeting with Defra on 26 October to discuss in detail the Pathway proposals that will inform the Vet Led visit and the Data capture from the Pathway. There is a sheep sector group meeting on Thursday, 4 November and we have been asked to feed into the sector group meeting AND feedback to Defra by 4<sup>th</sup> November. Input requested as to what data should be captured/provided by the farmer to qualify for the free 2 ½ hour veterinary visit. Suggestion is to focus on the top 10 and to keep it simple and practical. RM will attend the meeting to provide this feedback and will also indicate that it is impossible to provide a comprehensive considered approach in such a short time frame.

The possible data were discussed and committee members will provide further ideas by email today. **AP. JH** to share a farm visit template for sheep flock health planning with RM as that will contain a basic required data set to start with.

**JH.** Reported **increased demand for veterinary input from sheep farmers.**

**SM.** Requested that **emails that require urgent feedback** should have this indicated in the heading. **AP. All**

**DW.** Will attend a **scrapie monitoring meeting** tomorrow with industry re changes in requirement for when sheep can be moved.

**Next meeting** – during week commencing 13Dec – not too close to Xmas? I will send doodle poll again and include both lunchtime and evening options.

## Action Points

No	Description	Responsible	Completed?
1	Get chair added to the meeting programme template so it is not overlooked.	HR	
2	Communication to members. Committee have reviewed and agreed to have one physical and one virtual meeting a year from 2023 and then review how it works after 2024.	RM	
3	Send a reminder to members to inform the committee if they are a SVS representative on a group. I.E. SCOPS	HR	

4	BVA response to Defra labelling for animal welfare; call for evidence. Deadline 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021. To circulate a copy of the response to all committee members prior to submission.	RM	
5	To share a farm visit template/MSD flock list with RM as that will contain a basic required data set to start with.	JH	COMPLETED 3-11-21
6	Requested that emails that require urgent feedback should have this indicated in the heading.	All	
7	Re the eMedHub article. To feedback to FL re no volunteer found but mention possibility that farms with Tesco contracts may be using it given they are required to for cattle	RM	COMPLETED 4-11-21
	Provide summary of RoSA webinar to committee members	RM	COMPLETED 4-11-21

**End of meeting:**

Rebecca thanked those that attended and the meeting ended at 13h05