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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to bring you the Annual Report for 2018 which gives details of the activities we have been involved in during the past 12 months. We hope you find it informative and useful.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

Julie Beacham  President
Renay Rickard  Senior Vice President
Gillian Page  Junior Vice President
Cath Grimsey  Finance Director
Ian Wolstenholme
Ruth Mackay
Stuart Saunders
Janie Clare
Georgina Hills
Ashley Gray
Miles Russell – co opted 27.03.18
Richard Casey – co opted 27.03.18
Joanna Mallia – co opted 27.03.18 – resigned 11.12.18

CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Georgina Hills CVPM
Louise O’Hara CVPM
Roger Wilson MRCVS
Philippa Davis CVPM
Kerry Scarlett CVPM
Liz Howes CVPM

HONORARY MEMBERS

Fiona Baxter
John Bower
Carole Clarke
Rita Dingwall
Nancy Fox
Hanno Payne
John Sheridan
Maggie Shilcock
Brian Wright
Sarah Hibbert
Iain Lorraine
Rebekka Fiorani
Pauline Graham
Helen Sanderson
Howard Brown
Linda Marshall
Renay Rickard
Maria Barratt awarded Sept 2018

The Association is supported in the office by

Maria Barratt (up to 31.08.18)
Cath Grimsey

CVPM HOLDERS 2018

Michelle Machin VPAC, CVPM; Gemma Taylor RVN, CVPM; Emma Hollingworth RVN, VPAC, CVPM
VPAC HOLDERS 2018

Kirsty Godsell, Georgina Maloney, Michelle Machin, Lisa Coulborn, Angela Sneddon, Katie Barratt, Sarah Crowe, Zoe Mitton, Sarah Cook, Francesca Taylor, Ellie Fitchett, Laura Coppard, Laura McClinton, Lauren Seacombe, Amy Wilson, Christina Thornehill, Tayla Croxford, Polly Keane, Katie Hellowell, Abigail Thompson, Claire Ruysch, Hayley Hemingway, Toni O'Donovan, Amy Leavesley, Isabelle Anderson, Ruth Watson, Charlotte Hewitt, Victoria Loose, Emma Houston

PRESIDENT’S INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to introduce the VMG Annual Report for 2018 which gives details of the activities we have been involved in during the past 12 months. We hope that you find it informative and useful.

In summary, the year has been successful but a time of great change for VMG, within a fast-moving veterinary profession. Despite the rollercoaster of practice acquisitions by corporate groups, many of whom provide centralised support and training for their teams, our membership has grown to almost record levels. At the end of December 2018, the total number of members was 881.

It seems that our stated aims of ‘Learn – Share – Grow’ meet the needs of many in veterinary management. The demand for education and training remains strong and we congratulate the new VPAC and CVPM holders from 2018. The webinars, roadshows, social media platforms, e-group, Congress and CPD days allow sharing and networking and offer something for everyone.

Our rebrand at Congress in January was well received although it took several months of introducing VMG as ‘formerly known as the VPMA’ to get the recognition that we now enjoy. The new VMG website effectively showcases all that we have to offer and our monthly e-newsletter is a popular and environmentally friendly replacement for our printed journal.

The partnership we have with SPVS continues with another great Congress planned for 2019 and a fresh new CPD programme to come. There is VMG representation at BVA Council, the RCVS (Practice Standards and the Mind Matters Initiative), VDS meetings, and we receive requests from both the UK and abroad to provide CPD. In 2019 we are proud to be running a ‘New to Management’ day of lectures at BSAVA Congress and to be, once again, sponsoring Head Nurse Congress in May. During the year, we have been involved in some key initiatives including the BVA Vet Led Team Working Group and RCVS Stakeholder Day where we had input into the strategic plan.

The VMG Board of Directors currently numbers 12 although three will be stepping down in January 2019 and we are recruiting again. Senior Vice President, Renay Rickard, will be leaving after six years, two of them as President. Ian Wolstenholme, former Editor of ‘Practice Life’, and Cath Grimsey, Financial Director, will also be leaving the Board, although Cath will continue to run the VMG Office. They will all be missed and on behalf of the membership, I send sincere thanks to them all for their contribution to our success.

As a management organisation, we practice what we preach in continually seeking to embrace new technologies and work smarter. The VMG Office saw a momentous change in August when Maria Barratt, who had been one half of the VPMA Secretariat since 1998, left to pursue a new career. Cath currently runs the VMG Office singlehandedly, and is automating some of the functions to reduce the workload and improve efficiency. We send grateful thanks to Maria for her hard work and dedication, and her ongoing support and help. As President, I would also like to thank the members of the VMG Board, C&T Committee, our representatives and Regional Organisers and all who devote their time and talents to our cause.

Above all, thank you to you, our members – we wouldn’t be here without you!

Julie Beacham CVPM
President
MEMBER BENEFITS

In line with the organisation rebrand, the membership benefits offered to VMG members are also undergoing review and improvement. It remains the case that management roles in veterinary practice can be quite isolating and connecting with like-minded people within the industry will remain key to future VMG offerings. Increased electronic and social media platform communications have been, and continue to be, developed. The historic VMG list of member discounts from affiliated service providers will soon be replaced by a refreshed host of offers to be presented by our new Company Members.

During 2018 the VMG invested heavily in the launch of a super new website at www.vetmg.com With a fresh look, this fabulous website provides details of all the learning, sharing and growing opportunities offered by VMG. The Member-Only area, accessible only to current members through registration, contains a 30-strong webinar back catalogue, all VMG e-Newsletters and a huge number of video clips containing John Sheridan’s ‘Top Tips’. Plans for 2019 include uploading a full set of template documents for members to use to help to pass Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) assessments, and online membership renewals.

The VMG e-Newsletter has been improved for 2018 and features including Meanwhile Back in the Real World have brought news from across the industry to our members. This format has superseded the previously published Practice Life journal. The VMG E-group continues to be a fantastic tool for our members. Providing a day to day communication network through which information and advice can be exchanged, this year has seen topics including GDPR, rotas, mental health management and statutory sick pay discussed.

At the beginning of 2018 VMG took the decision to make its webinar entitled ‘GDPR: Data Protection law is changing: is your practice ready? (ICO)’ available to all of its colleagues due to the exceptional interest in this new legislation, and lack of other resources available to those managing its implementation in the industry. This webinar was viewed over 300 times, and the popular lunchtime management update webinar series continued to late spring 2018, discussing topics including Improving Well-being in Practice, Credit Control first and last steps: (Debt & GDPR) and Update on Practice Standards (PSS). After a break, this very popular member benefit is set to make a comeback in 2019.

During 2018, in addition to the excellent learning opportunities offered by the VMG-SPVS Annual Congress and regional CPD programmes, our regional structure offered our members the chance to look into hot topics within the industry in a little more depth. These regional meetings covered the whole of the country from Scotland to Worthing and offered some CPD whilst networking with practice colleagues. 16 regions hosted meetings during 2018, with the regional roadshows at the heart of the structure.

Cath Grimsey
VMG Office

BRITISH VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

During the year VMG was represented at four council meetings, held on 18.04.18 (London), 19.07.18 (London), 20.09.18 (York) and 12.12.18 (London).

The offices at Mansfield Street are undergoing a refurbishment project and the temporary offices are in 15 Hatfields, London. The project aims to transform Mansfield Street to create a modern, flexible and welcoming space for staff, members and visitors.

The current total membership of the BVA in December 2018 was 17,011. There is an increase in group scheme members and a reduction in standard members.

Over the year the work and commitment by the team at BVA has been outstanding, topics discussed and covered included: -

Brexit and Brexit no deal
National Audit Office assessment of DEFRA
Immigration
Agriculture Bill
Animal Sentience
Official Veterinarians
Workforce
Welfare at slaughter
Welfare of pet animals
Antimicrobial resistance
Bovine TB
Surveillance
Bluetongue
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Steering Group
UK One Health Coordination Group
BVA Animal Welfare Strategy
BVA Young Vet Network
Vet Futures

At the December 2018 meeting a presentation was given on telemedicine and remote prescribing by Kate Richards and Anthony Roberts representing the RCVS. This is clearly a topic which will require much consideration and consultation for the veterinary profession in the future.

Also, RVN prescriber was discussed and debated, the broad principles were considered and further updates will be communicated with any changes.

To conclude we worked in groups to discuss Motivation, Satisfaction, Retention and Gender Discrimination in the Veterinary Profession.

The BVA members day was held in September at the National Stem Learning Centre, University of York. The inauguration of the new BVA President Mr Simon Doherty and Junior Vice President Ms Daniella dos Santos was performed. Thanks, were made to Mr John Fishwick now Senior Vice President and Ms Gudrun Ravetz outgoing Senior Vice President.

During the year at each meeting respects are made to members who have passed away. During 2018 I read a tribute to Mr Iain Lorraine (Past VPMA President) who died after a short illness.

As members of the profession working at the heart of the operations and business we can certainly contribute to the debate, discussion and decisions made within the veterinary arena. Our working knowledge and day to day understanding of the profession is well recognised by the BVA council.

Once again it has been a pleasure and privilege to represent the VMG at BVA council.

Pauline Graham
VMG’s BVA Representative

CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING (C&T) COMMITTEE REPORT

One of the stated aims of the VMG is education (learn/share/grow) and providing training to develop and benchmark the skills of our members working in practice or the wider veterinary industry. Whilst there are an ever-increasing number of external training companies and academic institutions offering relevant courses and qualifications, the VMG is proud to have a long history in this field since the first CVPM exams were held in 1996 and the VPAC was first awarded in 2002.

The C&T Committee is responsible for both the VPAC and the CVPM, and in 2018 has comprised Georgina Hills CVPM (Chair), Louise O’Hara CVPM, Roger Wilson MRCVS, Philippa Davis CVPM, Liz Howes CVPM and Kerry Scarlett CVPM. For 2019 Matt Horobin CVPM joins the committee and Philippa Davis becomes chair.
VETERINARY PRACTICE ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATE (VPAC)

The VPAC is popular with both veterinary administrators and those wishing to gain an introductory qualification before moving into practice management. It is a useful qualification for junior or inexperienced managers who wish to develop their skills. Roger Wilson has been the C&T member responsible for VPAC during 2018 and will continue in 2019 before handing over for 2020.

The course continues to be delivered as a distance learning course by Lynwood School of Veterinary Nursing in Dorset as well as being included in the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing and Practice Management degree course delivered at Harper Adams University. January 2019 at Congress sees the relaunch of the syllabus with updated modules in marketing and finance, making the course of even more practical use for candidates.

VPAC information can be accessed from the Education section of the VMG website at www.vetmg.com

CERTIFICATE IN VETERINARY PRACTICE MANAGEMENT (CVPM)

Three CVPM work shops were held in 2018 with good levels of interest.

In 2019 there will be further sessions -

9th March Exeter and Aberdeen
11th May Manchester

The Committee continue to offer support to attend regional meetings and hold mini sessions on the CVPM. There will also be a session on education and the CVPM at Congress 2019 on the Friday at 3.30pm.

Eight candidates were registered for the 2018 exams which were held on Friday 30th November in Worcester. We were delighted that three candidates passed all elements of the exam to achieve the CVPM and two candidates who did not reach the required standard in the oral scenario questions only, have been offered a resit of this section at Congress 2019, which the candidates have accepted.

The total number of CVPM holders now stands at 80 and we congratulate Michelle Machin, Gemma Taylor and Emma Hollingworth.

To be eligible to sit the CVPM exam, candidates are required to meet the following criteria:

- Be full members of VMG throughout their registration period
- Register for CVPM and pay appropriate fees
- Be actively employed in a veterinary based management role (minimum period of 2 years' experience is advised)

Candidates are required to notify the VMG Office of their intention to sit the CVPM by 1st August in the year they intend to sit the exam. The required components for the 2018 CVPM were:

- A 3000 word essay entitled "How I have used my knowledge to benefit the veterinary environment in which I work", submitted at the time of registration.
- A ten-minute PowerPoint presentation, based on a topic supplied one month prior to the exam, given on exam day, followed by a 15 minute structured discussion of the report and presentation with the examiners.
- Thirty minutes of discussion and questions based on a fictitious practice, the details of which were circulated to candidates two weeks prior to the exam date. This gave the candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in all six areas in the syllabus.
- A 30 minute oral component involving ten scenarios reflecting subjects and situations that can occur every day in veterinary management.
The VMG Board believe that the CVPM continues to provide a valuable industry-recognised qualification for candidates who can demonstrate their ability to effectively manage a veterinary practice, hospital or similar.

Further details and information on the CVPM qualification, syllabus and exam process are available on the Learn section of the VMG website. Details of the next exam including dates and fees will be made available on the website in early 2019.

Report prepared by Georgina Hills CVPM on behalf of the C&T Committee, December 2018

REGIONS

2018 has been the year of the VMG Regional Regeneration! At the beginning of the year our team of committed regional volunteers set out help the VMG Board to breathe new life in to the regional structure through a series of Regional Roadshows.

The VMG now has 17 active regions. During 2018 our fantastic volunteer Regional Organisers hosted 24 meetings welcoming over 150 delegates. At Congress 2019 the Regional Organisers will hold their annual review of the regional structure and make plans for 2019.

Roadshow One presented ‘Credit Control within the GDPR regulations’ (plus one independent meeting South West) and consisted of 14 meetings across the country, in all active regions plus new region North Wales and previously inactive regions Scotland and South Wales. It attracted 106 members and 76 non-members. Feedback was largely positive, and huge thanks went to dsl (UK) Ltd who hosted all the informative lectures.

Roadshow Two presented ‘Practice Performance and Culture’ with VetLed, some of which were supplemented with the Blue Cross PBSS team presentation on Client Retention during Pet Loss. Of the 12 planned meetings 7 ran hosting a total of 30 members and 27 non-members. Thanks again went to all the presenters.

Roadshow Three completed the Client Care during Pet Bereavement with Blue Cross and several meetings were scheduled for a collaboration with Caroline Pearson from Progressive Vet Consulting to present Networking for Recruitment. 10 meetings were planned but seven had to be cancelled due to lack of registrations. The three that went ahead hosted very small audiences but received excellent feedback.

Cumulatively the Roadshows returned a net loss of just under £2,000.

Cath Grimsey
VMG Office and Regional Co-Ordinator

THE VETERINARY DEFENCE SOCIETY

The VMG have continued to support and be closely involved with the VDS by attending events held throughout the UK during 2018.

The VMG was represented by members of the Board of Directors. The events supported by the VMG were:

Graduate Reunions
RVC 8 September
Glasgow 22 September
Nottingham 6 October
Liverpool 27 October
Cambridge 3 November
Dublin 10 November
Bristol 24 November
Thank you to everyone who has represented VMG at these events. The training and educational work that the VDS deliver is of great value to delegates and their work is supported wholeheartedly.

RCVS PRACTICE STANDARDS SCHEME 2018 UPDATE

Including those practices which are candidates, 3,560 practice premises are now part of the Scheme, representing just over 65% of all eligible practice premises in the UK. This has increased from 58% membership of eligible practice premises from this time two years ago. Core Standards still represents one of the biggest types of accreditation with 1,430 practices accredited to Core level however GP level accreditations continue to rise steadily with 1,574 Small Animal GP practices; 162 Farm Animal GP practices and 167 Equine GP practices in the Scheme.

Awards continue to grow in popularity with 183 practices holding 292 Awards which is an increase from 111 practices with 170 Awards this time last year which is a wonderfully successful outcome for the Awards part of the Scheme. Of these 292 Awards, 271 have been achieved at Outstanding level. The most frequently achieved Awards are still Client Service at 144 Awards followed by Emergency and Critical Care with 51 Awards in that category.

On the evening of 15th November 2018, we held another annual PSS Awards Ceremony. The evening took place at the Crown Plaza hotel in London Docklands after the London Vet Show. A number of practices attended to celebrate their momentous success in achieving their hard-earned Awards, which were presented to the practices by RCVS President, Amanda Boag. Newly appointed PSG Chair and Council member Mandisa Greene MRCVS was also in attendance and was MC to the event. Testimonials were provided by guest speakers Dr Andrew Wallace from Buckingham Equine Vets and Vicky Johnston from St David’s Veterinary Group who both provided great insight into the preparation necessary when applying for an Award. They also spoke about the positive effects that have been noted within their practices and within the staff team since achieving these Awards and the pride they now feel within their respective practices as a result.

The Scheme will undergo a review of all the Standards to be released in 2020. In preparation for this, the Practice Standards Group will meet more often during 2019 in order to enable this. It will not however be a ‘belt and braces’ review as in 2015 – this review will be more of an overview and centred on taking stock of the Scheme and the Awards taking into account best practices and reviewing areas in particular where the requirements need to be tweaked to take account of changes to legislation or feedback from practices regarding requirements etc.

A marketing campaign of the Scheme is planned for early 2019. This is being carried out in conjunction with the RVCS Communications team and an external marketing company. The campaign will focus on promoting the Scheme to members of the public and increasing their awareness of the Scheme and the benefits it offers in terms of animal health and care.

Lily Lipman who is currently employed in the Veterinary Nursing team at the RCVS will take over as Senior Manager of the Scheme on a permanent basis from the end of January 2019.

Once again, it has been another busy year for the RCVS PSS Group. Any feedback from VMG members would be welcome and if you also have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the VMG representative Rita Dingwall via the VMG Office.

Rita Dingwall, CMgr, MCMI, CVPM
VPMA Past President
VMG/SPVS COMBINED CPD 2018

In 2018 VMGs partnership with SPVS has continued to deliver a joint programme of high quality, continuing professional development (CPD) for managers in the veterinary profession. Delivered regionally, our programme included a range of topics covering the whole management and leadership spectrum, focussed for those in a management role. CPD bookings at the start of 2018 appeared to be slow; however, after investing in further marketing this was quickly turned around. We ended the year having run sixteen CPD events for over 280 delegates. Our progressing into management events has continued to be particularly successful.

The 2019 programme will see the return of our most popular CPD events. Throughout 2019 VMG will also be working with our members and the wider veterinary community to understand what managers are confident with in their roles and what they aren’t. This will be used to inform our CPD programmes for 2020 and beyond, ensuring we continue to deliver high quality CPD that is highly relevant today.

CPD lead for VMG in 2018 was Ruth Mackay, who handed over to Richard Casey in September. SPVS was represented by Catriona Curtis who in preparation for her presidential year, has now handed over to Anna Judson. VMG would like to thank SPVS for their continued support, as well as the team at Keystone Events who oversee the programme on our behalf. Special thanks go to our 2018 sponsors Royal Canin and Bayer and media partner Veterinary Business Journal.

Finally, to our CPD delegates, thank you for your enthusiasm and support this year and we look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Richard Casey, CPD Chair
VMG Board

COMMUNICATION

Magazine and Newsletter

The past year has unfortunately seen the demise of Practice Life magazine published quarterly on behalf of VMG and SPVS. VMG has however continued to reflect topical news and member information via its popular digital newsletter and this will continue to be developed as a member benefit.

Website and Social Media

The VMG website www.vetmg.com continues to be a valuable information resource for members and visitors and has recently been completely overhauled to include current topics and trends in the veterinary management arena. As a membership tool the website is built for ease of use and is a comprehensive directory of what that which the VMG offers its membership to learn, share and grow. Bolting onto the website, our social media presence via Facebook and Twitter continues to develop which is an excellent way of staying in touch with association news.

Trade Stands

During 2018 we once again took a trade stand at the London Vet Show. The exhibition provided the VMG with a busy stand and good profile.

Ian Wolstenholme, VMG Board
VMG Editor

PETPLAN AWARDS

Practice Manager of The Year
The VMG were involved in the Petplan Awards for the Practice Manager of the Year 2018. The winner is offered a years’ free membership to VMG. Entries were sought from owners, managers and all other veterinary staff and a healthy bundle of entries was submitted. The judges awarded Helen McHugh from Holmefield Veterinary Clinic Ltd., North Yorkshire the title of Practice Manager of the Year. She was crowned Practice Manager of the Year at this year’s Petplan awards in April.
Particularly impressive for the independent panel of judges was Helen’s strong commitment to the practice’s ethos of doing the best she can for both patients and customers, whilst always maintaining a lead by example approach to continually motivate the team.

Helen was already a VMG member and took advantage of the years’ free membership at the time of her renewal which we hope she has found useful.

Maria Barratt
VMG Office

CONGRESS

Congress continues to grow and get better every year. We are delighted to announce that Congress 2018 made VMG/SPVS a profit of just over £100,000 which when split equally gives VMG a total of just above £50,000. The feedback we got from the exhibitors following the move downstairs was very positive and we have had no problem in selling these spaces which has given us record sponsorship before our delegate sales. We also got some positive feedback from delegates regarding the added space allowing for easy access to see the suppliers; we will continue to keep this format for as long as we continue at Celtic Manor.

This is one of the few hotels that can accommodate the size of our Congress, but it is also expanding so will be able to keep up with our growth whilst making sure we keep that friendly family atmosphere by ensuring we are all under one roof - this is what makes our Congress so successful and unique. It is a most luxurious hotel, so having a bit of me time will also be possible! Celtic Manor will be the venue for the next two congresses.

This years’ format remains similar with five streams running alongside each other including a Recruit and Retain stream, Wellbeing stream and continuing with our popular Equine and Large Animal stream split between Friday and Saturday. After the great success last year of our “New to Management” stream on the Friday we are again running the day, and SPVS are this year running a ‘Vet Stay’ stream on Saturday, following feedback we have moved these streams to a larger room.

Networking has always been an important aspect of Congress, and again following the success of last year we have endeavoured to ensure entertaining social events with a repeat “comedy night” on the Thursday night and our glittering “Cuba” themed ball on the Friday night.

Keystone Events Ltd. have undertaken the administration of Congress, and we would like to thank them for their continued hard work to make Congress such a great event.

Georgina Hills, VMG Board