

IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS COUNCIL ELECTION SCHEME 1967, as amended in 2006 (“the Scheme”), as approved by the Privy Council

AND IN THE MATTER OF A CHALLENGE TO THE VALIDITY OF THE ELECTION TO THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE HELD IN APRIL 2017 BY TOM LONSDALE MRCVS, THE RESULTS OF WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COLLEGE HELD ON 7 JULY 2017

DECISION OF THE CHALLENGE COMMITTEE

Relevant background

1. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council Election 2017 (“the Election”) was held in April 2017, in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme. The Election was administered on behalf of the Royal College (“the RCVS”) by Electoral Reform Services. Voting closed at 5pm on Friday 28 April 2017, and in accordance with paragraph 22 of the Scheme, the results of the Election were announced at the Annual General Meeting of the RCVS held on 7 July 2017. There were 16 candidates at the Election, and six vacancies to be filled. Mr Lonsdale was a candidate at the Election, and polled 496 votes. The winning candidates polled between 3,073 and 1,909 votes. The total number of valid votes cast was 6,731, some 54 votes having been declared invalid.
2. (In this Decision, all references to “paragraph” numbers are references to the relevant paragraphs of the Scheme, unless the context otherwise requires.)
3. By letters dated 25 July 2017 and 6 August 2017, Mr Lonsdale challenged the validity of the Election under paragraph 24(1)(b), on the grounds that the Election was furthered by conduct which, if the Election had been regulated by the Representation of the People Act 1983 (“the RPA 1983”), would have been a corrupt practice by way of undue influence under section 115 of that Act. Mr Lonsdale does not rely on the alternative ground of challenge under paragraph 24(1)(a) (not in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme).
4. Paragraph 3 provides that the Registrar of the College (Ms Eleanor Ferguson) shall act as the Returning Officer at the Election, and she was largely responsible for the conduct of the Election so far as Mr Lonsdale was concerned, subject to the provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (“the VSA 1966”), and the Scheme.
5. In accordance with paragraph 24(3), a Challenge Committee of three members of the Council, who were not elected members, was duly nominated by the Junior Vice-President of the RCVS, comprising Professor Richard Hammond, Professor James Wood, and Ms Elaine Acaster. Professor Hammond was appointed to the Council by the University of Bristol, Professor Wood was appointed by the University of Cambridge, and Ms Acaster was appointed by the University of London.
6. In accordance with paragraph 24(4) of the Scheme, the Junior Vice-President of the RCVS duly nominated Richard Price OBE QC, one of the Legal Assessors appointed under paragraph 6

of Schedule 2 to the VSA 1966, to sit with the Committee in an advisory capacity, but without a vote.

7. The election was run in accordance with a strict timetable, stipulated under the Scheme. The last date for nominations was 31st January. The last date for despatch of voting papers was 31st March (Paragraph 7 of the Scheme). The Returning Officer has no discretion under the Scheme to alter this timetable save in specific circumstances which had no application to this election.

Allegations of bias

8. Since 1991, Mr Lonsdale has been conducting a public campaign based on his belief that the poisoning of pets (impairing health or occasioning premature death) by the junk pet-food industry in collusion with the veterinary profession, represents unconscionable animal cruelty. He claims that the sale of harmful junk-food products, portrayed by most veterinary surgeons as being beneficial for animal health and welfare, is in his opinion a fraudulent activity and a criminal offence. In his letter of challenge dated 25 July 2017, Mr Lonsdale states that he has levelled these allegations against all the British University veterinary schools, the RCVS, the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association. He then states:

“Accordingly, and for the removal of any apprehension of bias whether actual or perceived, I believe that no member of those universities or organisations should sit on the Challenge Committee.”

9. Mr Lonsdale challenged the appointment of the three members of the Challenge Committee who were appointed as set out above, and argued that they should all recuse themselves on the grounds of actual or apparent bias. Mr Lonsdale also challenged the continuing involvement of the Legal Assessor, Richard Price OBE QC, who he alleged had displayed bias in the way that he had given advice to the Committee. The members of the Committee responded to Mr Lonsdale’s allegations, received submissions from the RCVS, and received advice from the Legal Assessor. The Committee duly met on 18 October 2017, and dismissed Mr Lonsdale’s application that they should recuse themselves. Written reasons for that decision were sent to Mr Lonsdale on 3 November 2017. The Legal Assessor considered the application to recuse himself, but dismissed it on 30 October 2017. The written reasons for that decision were sent to Mr Lonsdale on 31 October 2017.

The RCVS response to the substantive challenge to the validity of the Election

10. As stated above, Mr Lonsdale’s challenge to the validity of the Election, and the grounds on which he relied are contained in his letters of 25 July 2017 and 6 August 2017, copies of which are attached as **APPENDIX 1**.
11. On 23 November 2017, the RCVS responded to this challenge in writing, with several attachments. The RCVS deals with the various grounds of challenge advanced by Mr Lonsdale, which are summarised below. It is necessary to consider the elements of the offence of undue influence under the RPA 1983, in order to decide whether Mr Lonsdale has identified any conduct at the Election that would have amounted to the corrupt practice of undue influence if the Election had been regulated by the RPA 1983.

12. If the Committee were to conclude that the election was furthered by conduct amounting to a corrupt practice, the election may not be declared void unless it is satisfied that the irregularity complained of rendered the election *substantially* not in accordance with the Scheme or *significantly affected the result* of the election (Paragraph 24(7)).
13. A candidate may supply with his nomination an election statement and biographical information (of a format and length as specified in paragraph 11). Mr Lonsdale's challenge is concerned with decisions made by the Returning Officer under paragraph 11 of the Scheme to edit his statement before circulation to the electorate and not to publish his Questions and Answers video on the RCVS's website.
14. The Returning Officer is not required to circulate an election statement which s/he "*reasonably considers to be defamatory or otherwise unlawful, or factually misleading, and may in the absence of agreement with the candidate either edit the election statement before circulating it or decide not to circulate it*" (Paragraph 11(4)).
15. In this instance, Mr Lonsdale's election statement was circulated albeit in an edited form. Mr Lonsdale was given the opportunity to revise/edit the written statement and video himself but chose not to do so. In those circumstances, the Returning Officer edited the written statement herself and chose not to publish the video.
16. The Scheme provides that any question as to format or presentation of an election statement or biographical information is determined conclusively by the Returning Officer (Paragraph 11(5)). Further, by supplying an election statement or biographical information, Mr Lonsdale was taken to have agreed that the decision by a Returning Officer not to issue the whole or any part of a statement was final (Paragraph 11(6)(a)).

Relevant legal framework

17. The relevant provision of the RPA 1983 is section 115, which provides as follows:

"115.— Undue influence.

A person shall be guilty of a corrupt practice if he is guilty of undue influence.

(2) A person shall be guilty of undue influence:

(a) if he, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, makes use of or threatens to make use of any force, violence or restraint, or inflicts or threatens to inflict, by himself or by any other person, any temporal or spiritual injury, damage, harm or loss upon or against any person in order to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting, or on account of that person having voted or refrained from voting; or

(b) if, by abduction, duress or any fraudulent device or contrivance, he impedes or prevents [or intends to impede or prevent,] the free exercise of the franchise of an elector or proxy for an elector, or so compels, induces or prevails upon [, or intends so to compel, induce or prevail upon,] an elector or proxy for any elector either to vote or to refrain from voting.(emphasis added).

18. Mr Lonsdale relies only on limb (2)(b) of s. 115. He does not make any allegation of abduction or duress. He must therefore be relying on the alleged use of a "*fraudulent device or contrivance*", whereby a person (i) impedes or prevents, or intends to impede or prevent, the

free exercise of the franchise of an elector..., or (ii) so compels, induces or prevails upon, or intends so to compel, induce or prevail upon an elector...either to vote or refrain from voting.

19. The meaning of section 115(2)(b) was considered by the Court of Appeal in *R v Rowe, ex parte Mainwaring* [1992] 1 WLR 1059, which involved the use of a fraudulent device or contrivance, namely election leaflets that lied about their provenance. The purpose of the section is to safeguard the election from fraudulent influences. The word “prevent” means that the device made the elector change his mind. “Impede” means something less than that and indicates interference which the elector in the end resisted.
20. The RCVS submitted that offences against section 115(2)(b) must be measured by whether an impediment or prevention had been proved, relying on the decision of the Court of Appeal in the *Mainwaring* case. The Legal Assessor, who is an expert in election law, advised the Panel that this was no longer the case, because the words in square brackets in section 115(2)(b), as set out in paragraph 17 above were added by section 39 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006. This means that section 115(2)(b) no longer requires proof that the free exercise of the franchise of an elector or electors was actually impeded or prevented, or that an elector or electors were actually compelled, induced or prevailed upon to vote or refrain from voting. It is sufficient to prove that the person using the fraudulent device or contrivance intended to achieve that result.
21. Section 115(2)(b) requires proof *beyond reasonable doubt*.

The basis of Mr Lonsdale’s challenge

22. Mr Lonsdale relies on the following acts on the part of the RCVS to establish corrupt practices by way of undue influence, presumably on the part of the Returning Officer:
 - (i) The RCVS’s refusal to allow Mr Lonsdale to include hypertext links in his online manifesto;
 - (ii) The removal of the names of pet food manufacturers that are, according to Mr Lonsdale, the subject of a legal class action in the USA;
 - (iii) The refusal to publish his Question and Answer video;
 - (iv) Different and unfair treatment of his video compared to videos of other candidates.
23. Mr Lonsdale alleges that undue influence exercised by a “*demonstrably corrupt*” RCVS had a “*significant and/or substantial effect as per the functions and purposes of elections*”. The RCVS understands Mr Lonsdale to submit that the criteria for setting the election aside pursuant to paragraph 24(7) of the Scheme are made out. Mr Lonsdale invites the Challenge Committee to declare the election void.

The RCVS’s response

Generally

No corrupt practice by way of undue influence

24. The RCVS does not accept that any of the four matters complained of by Mr Lonsdale could be found to constitute a corrupt practice by way of undue influence as defined by s.115 of the

1983 Act or that such practices furthered the election for the purpose of paragraph 24(1)(b) of the Scheme.

25. Mr Lonsdale's submission is premised on his view that the veterinary profession as a whole is corrupt and involved in a conspiracy with pet food manufacturers to promote pet food that is injurious to animals. He contends that the RCVS has been involved in a cover up and that the RCVS's refusal "*to acknowledge and investigate what I describe as the Mass Poisoning of Pets by Vets shows that undue influence, whether by errors of omission or commission, is at the core of the RCVS modus operandi*". He invites the Challenge Committee to accept his assertions that the RCVS is either corrupt or involved in corruption and then go on to find that the RCVS's actions during the election process were in furtherance of these corrupt objectives or in order to cover up corruption.
26. The RCVS denies that it is involved in any conspiracy with pet food manufacturers to poison pets or is involved in any cover up of corrupt practices by pet food manufacturers and others in the profession to poison pets. The allegations that the RCVS is corrupt or seeking to cover up corruption of others is not supported by any evidence and the RCVS invites the Committee to dismiss Mr Lonsdale's assertions in this regard.

Specific response to the four complaints made

27. As outlined above, the RCVS denies that any of the four matters (whether individually or taken together) amounted to conduct which would have been a corrupt practice by way of undue influence for the purpose of s. 115 of the 1983 Act (had it applied to this election).

(i) Hypertext links in online manifesto

28. The candidate statement and biography submitted by Mr Lonsdale contained numerous hyperlinks to external websites. The Frequently Asked Questions guidance that the RCVS circulated to candidates states that "Links to websites etc. are not permitted" (see response to question 5).
29. Mr Lonsdale does not bring a challenge on the basis that the RCVS was not entitled under the Scheme to ban website links. His challenge is brought on the basis that there was a corrupt practice by way of undue influence in that regard.
30. In any event, the RCVS had that power. Pursuant to paragraph 11(1) of the Scheme, candidates are required to supply election statements and biographical information "*in such format as the Returning Officer shall specify*". Further paragraph 11(5) provides that "*any question as to the format or presentation of an election statement, biographical information.....shall be decided conclusively by the Returning Officer*" and the decision of the Returning Officer not to issue part of a statement is final under the Scheme (paragraph 11(6)).
31. The Returning Officer was entitled to decide that links to external websites were not permitted in election statements or candidate biographies and to require Mr Lonsdale to remove those links. All other candidates were subject to this requirement, and so he was treated in the same way as other candidates. Mr Lonsdale was free to and did put the version of his election statement and biography on his website with the links included. (Mr Lonsdale's website was identified on his Candidate Information Form sent to electors by the RCVS).

32. There is no evidence that the refusal to allow hyperlinks had any influence on the free exercise of votes by any member of the electorate. The suggestion that this was a corrupt practice by way of undue influence is fanciful and denied.

ii) The removal of the names of pet food manufacturers

33. In the original version of his election statement, Mr Lonsdale named a number of corporate bodies in relation to a class action in the USA which he says "*alleges conspiracy to defraud over the sale and promotion of prescription foods*".

34. Mr Lonsdale was asked to replace the names of the companies with the phrase "household names". When he refused to do so, his election statement was edited so as to refer to "household names" and to delete the reference to the specific companies.

35. Mr Lonsdale does not bring a challenge on the basis that the RCVS had no power to edit his election statement in the way that it did. The RCVS's position, in any event, is that the Returning Officer had the power to do so pursuant to paragraph 11(4) – 11(6) of the Scheme. There was a reasonable basis for considering the statement to be defamatory, because companies were being named in connection with allegations of conspiracy and unlawful conduct that would be likely to cause harm to their reputation and/or affect their reputation adversely in the estimation of reasonable people generally.

36. Mr Lonsdale was entitled to publish the full version of the statement on his own website and did so. (Mr Lonsdale's website was identified on his Candidate Information Form sent to electors by the RCVS). Mr Lonsdale was not the only candidate whose election material was edited (this also occurred in relation to Mr John Davies).

37. There is no evidence that the removal of the names from his election statement had any influence on the free exercise of voting by any member of the electorate. The allegation of undue influence is fanciful and denied.

(iii) The refusal to host his Questions and Answers video

38. Mr Lonsdale was asked to edit his Questions and Answers Video to remove a reference in the video that referred to "governing bodies" (in the plural) in connection with an allegation that they were corrupt (amongst other things). He also stated in the video that the governing bodies were negligent, incompetent and should be prosecuted. He was asked to edit his video so that he did not refer to other governing bodies, although he was entitled to criticise the RCVS. That was on the basis that the statements were considered defamatory of other governing bodies to which Mr Lonsdale is subject and which could easily be identified including, for example, the Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales in Australia, where Mr Lonsdale practises. Mr Lonsdale's election video, unedited, was available on YouTube. The editing that the RCVS requested was relatively minor.

39. Mr Lonsdale refused to edit his video and hence, the Registrar decided not to publish the video on the RCVS's website.

40. Mr Lonsdale does not dispute the Registrar's power to refuse to publish his video. The RCVS's position, for the avoidance of doubt, is that the Registrar plainly had such power pursuant to paragraph 11(4) – (6) of the Scheme. Further, candidates were reminded of these provisions in an e-mail sent to them on 9 March 2017 in connection with video statements. The

purpose behind paragraph 11 and the Registrar's power to edit or not publish election statements is to avoid the RCVS incurring a liability to any third person arising from the publishing of such statements.

41. Mr Lonsdale's election video was, in any event, available on YouTube and he could have published a link to it from his own website.
42. There is no evidential basis for alleging that the RCVS, in not publishing his video, was engaging in a corrupt practice by way of undue influence. There is no evidence that any voter has been impeded or prevented from exercising a free vote by the RCVS refusing to publish his video on its website. The allegation is fanciful and is denied.

(iv) Alleged double standards for favoured candidates

43. Mr Lonsdale alleges that he has been treated unfairly compared to two other candidates, Miss Sarah Brown and Mr Danny Chambers who were successfully elected. He states that the RCVS published videos made by them although they contained "*highly disparaging remarks about readily identifiable veterinary surgeons who practise Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine*".
44. The allegation is denied. Both Mr Chambers and Ms Brown made critical comments in their videos about the practise of alternative veterinary medicine where unproven treatments are offered to clients or false claims made about their efficacy. Both stated that they supported the RCVS seeking to regulate or provide guidance in relation to such treatments.
45. Mr Chambers was asked to edit the original version of his video on the basis that it appeared to single out a particular veterinary practitioner for criticism. Mr Chambers then edited the video so as to criticise the offering of alternative treatments in more general terms. The edited video was then published. Ms Brown's criticisms of alternative therapies are stated in general terms and she does not criticise expressly or implicitly any particular individual offering such treatment. The published videos raise matters of proper discussion and debate in the profession but do not contain defamatory or other material that could expose the RCVS to a liability to third parties.
46. There is no evidential basis for the allegation that Mr Lonsdale was treated in an unfair way by comparison to other candidates. Nor is there any evidential basis for the allegation that the RCVS was engaged in a corrupt practice by way of undue influence by refusing to publish his video. There is no evidence that any voter was impeded or prevented from exercising a free vote by reason of the failure to publish the video. The suggestion of a corrupt practice is fanciful.

Paragraph 24(7) requirements not met

47. Even if, contrary to the above, the Committee were to make a finding of a corrupt practice by way of undue influence, it would not follow automatically that the election would be declared void. The Committee would still have to apply paragraph 24(7) of the Scheme and satisfy itself of one of the limbs. This paragraph provides that the Challenge Committee shall not declare an election void unless it is satisfied (a) that the irregularity concerned rendered the election substantially not in accordance with this Scheme; or (b) that the irregularity concerned significantly affected the result of the election.

48. The RCVS submits that this provision of the Scheme reflects the RPA 1983, which renders elections void only in particular circumstances where the corrupt practice has so extensively prevailed that it is reasonably supposed to have affected the result. The RCVS relies on section 164(1) of the RPA 1983, which deals with general corruption at an election. The Legal Assessor has advised the Panel that paragraph 24(7) does not reflect section 164(1) of the RPA 1983. However, he referred the Panel to sections 23 and 48 of the RPA 1983, which provide that no parliamentary or local government elections are to be declared invalid, by reason of any act or omission by the returning officer or any other person in breach of his official duty in relation to the election, if it appears to the court having cognizance of the question that (a) the election was conducted so as to be substantially in accordance with the law as to elections, and (b) the act or omission did not reflect the result. He advised the Panel that the provisions of paragraph 24(7) of the Scheme do reflect those provisions in the RPA 1983.
49. The RCVS submits that the Challenge Committee cannot be satisfied on the evidence that (i) the irregularity concerned rendered the election substantially not in accordance with the Scheme or (ii) that the irregularity concerned significantly affected the result of the election. There is, therefore, no power to declare the election void.
50. None of the matters complained about in terms of editing or not publishing his election statement (whether in written or video form) could be treated as rendering the election *substantially* not in accordance with the Scheme under paragraph 24(7)(a), because they affected Mr Lonsdale alone and did not affect the integrity of the election process as a whole. There was no fundamental departure from the principles of a free and fair election, such that the whole election could properly be described as a sham or travesty of an election by ballot. The Legal Assessor advised that this was the relevant test under the RPA 1983 (see *Morgan v Simpson (1975) QB 151*).
51. As to the alternative ground (para. 24(7)(b)) the Committee is unable to be satisfied that the matters complained of significantly affected the result of the election. There is no evidence that if these matters had not occurred, that Mr Lonsdale would have been elected to the Council. He came second to last in the election and was in truth, never in the running for the election. He received 496 votes and the candidate with the fewest votes who was elected received 1,909 votes. It is also relevant that Mr Lonsdale has stood in all Council elections since 1997 and has come last, save for in 2017, when Mr Davies came last. It is inconceivable that he would have polled sufficient votes to be elected to the Council.

Mr Lonsdale's closing submissions

52. Mr Lonsdale did not respond to the RCVS's response to his letters of challenge, but did provide written closing submissions dated 22 December 2017, a copy of which is attached as **APPENDIX 2**. In this document, Mr Lonsdale continued to complain about the refusal of the members of the Challenge Committee to recuse themselves. He also quoted from three communications from veterinary surgeons who agreed with his general campaign. He did not respond to the RCVS submissions summarised above.
53. **The Decision of the Challenge Committee**

The Committee has considered the letters of challenge from Mr Lonsdale, the detailed response from the RCVS, with various documents attached, and Mr Lonsdale's closing submissions.

The Committee has accepted the advice as to matters of election law given by the Legal Assessor as indicated above.

54. The Committee notes that, since 1991, Mr Lonsdale has been conducting his public campaign alleging corruption and other fraudulent activity against all the British veterinary schools, the RCVS, the BVA and the BSAVA, and all members of those universities or organisations. He has campaigned using extreme and immoderate language, and appears convinced of the righteousness of his cause. It is no part of the function of the Committee to express any view as to the merits of Mr Lonsdale's campaign.
55. The function of the Committee is to decide whether Mr Lonsdale's challenge to the validity of the Election has merit, and whether to declare the Election void in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme, and in the light of the evidence presented.
56. The Committee notes that much, if not most, of the material contained in Mr Lonsdale's letters of challenge, and his written submissions, consists of outlining the substance of his campaign, much of which is directed against the RCVS.
57. Mr Lonsdale invites the Committee to accept his assertions that the RCVS is corrupt or involved in corruption, and is involved in a conspiracy with pet food manufacturers to promote pet food that is injurious to animals. He urges the Committee to find that the RCVS's actions during the election process were in furtherance of these corrupt objectives, or in order to cover up corruption.
58. The Committee finds that there is no evidence from which it can reasonably be inferred that the RCVS is corrupt or has sought to cover up the corruption of others, as alleged by Mr Lonsdale or at all. In any event, such general allegations are of no assistance to the Committee in dealing with the four specific allegations of wrongdoing relating to the conduct of the Election.
59. The Committee will deal with each of the four allegations relating to the conduct of the Election by the Returning Officer in turn.
 - (i) Hypertext links in online manifesto
60. The Committee accepts the submissions of the RCVS, as summarised above, in relation the complaint about the banning of hyperlinks to external websites.
61. The candidate statement and biography submitted by Mr Lonsdale were littered with hyperlinks. The Committee considers that the rationale for a ban on hyperlinks is that the RCVS has no control over the material published on external websites. As a result, the RCVS would potentially be liable to third parties for assisting in the publication of material that could be the subject legal action or complaint.
62. In any event, the Committee considers that the Registrar had the power and discretion to ban hyperlinks in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11. The ban affected all candidates.

Mr Lonsdale was entitled to and did publish his candidate statement and biography on his own website, which was identified on his Candidate Information Form.

63. The Committee finds that there is no evidence from which it can reasonably be inferred that:
- (a) the ban on hyperlinks by the Registrar, or anyone else at the RCVS, constituted the use of a “*fraudulent device or contrivance*”;
 - (b) the Registrar, or anyone else at the RCVS, by banning hyperlinks, had the intention of impeding or preventing the free exercise of the franchise by any elector or electors at the Election, or of compelling, inducing or prevailing upon any elector to vote or to refrain from voting at the Election,

within the meaning of section 115(2)(b) of the RPA 1983.

(ii) The removal of names of pet food manufacturers from the election statement

64. The Committee accepts the submissions of the RCVS, as summarised above, in relation to the complaint about the removal of the names of pet food manufacturers from Mr Lonsdale’s election statement.
65. The Committee considers that it was reasonable for the Registrar to come to the view that the statements naming various pet food companies, in connection with allegations of conspiracy and unlawful conduct, was likely to cause serious harm to the reputation of those companies and was defamatory. If publication of the names of these companies had been allowed, there was the risk that the RCVS would be exposed to legal action by third parties.
66. In any event, the Registrar had power to edit the election statement in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11. Mr Lonsdale was entitled to and did publish the full version of his election statement on his website, which was identified on his Candidate Information Form.
67. The Committee notes that, in an e-mail to the RCVS (Dawn Wiggins) dated 9 February 2017, Mr Lonsdale thanked her for confirmation of the final version of his election statement, “and for making those changes to the satisfaction of the Executive”. It appears, therefore, that Mr Lonsdale accepted the required changes to his statement.
68. The Committee repeats paragraph 63 above, in relation to the removal of the names of pet food manufacturers from Mr Lonsdale’s election statement.

(iii) The refusal to host the Questions and Answers video

69. The Committee accepts the submissions of the RCVS, as summarised above, in relation to the complaint about the refusal to host the Questions and Answers video.
70. The RCVS asked Mr Lonsdale to edit his proposed Q & A video so as not to refer in defamatory terms to other governing bodies in Australia to which he is subject. The editing was relatively

minor, but Mr Lonsdale refused to edit the video. The Committee notes that, having been asked to edit the video, by email to the RCVS dated 28 March 2017, Mr Lonsdale said "Next week, when I return to Sydney I shall be plenty busy and no time or interest in recording another video". It seems he was not particularly concerned about this matter.

71. The Committee has no doubt that the Registrar had the right to refuse to publish the unedited video, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 11. The video was available on YouTube.

72. The Committee repeats paragraph 63 above, in relation to the refusal to publish Mr Lonsdale's Q & A video.

(iv) Alleged double standards for favoured candidates

73. The Committee accepts the submission of the RCVS, as summarised above, in relation to the complaint about double standards for favoured candidates.

74. The RCVS has answered this complaint in clear terms. Both Mr Chambers and Miss Brown made critical comments in their videos about the practise of alternative veterinary medicine, where unproven treatments are offered to clients or false claims made about their efficacy.

75. Mr Chambers was asked to edit the original version of his video on the basis that it singled out a particular veterinary practitioner for criticism. He then edited his video so as to criticise the offering of alternative treatments in more general terms. The edited video was published. Ms Brown's criticisms of alternative therapies were in general terms, and she did not identify particular individuals. The resulting videos did not contain any defamatory or other material, which might expose the RCVS to a liability to third parties. Thus, no double standards were applied.

76. The Committee repeats paragraph 63 above, in relation to the allegation of double standards for favoured candidates.

General observations of the Committee

77. The Committee is satisfied that the RCVS has considered and responded to the allegations that have been made by Mr Lonsdale in some detail. The Committee notes that Mr Lonsdale has not responded to the submissions made by the RCVS in any meaningful way, but simply continues to maintain that the RCVS is corrupt, for the reasons that he has set out at length. The Committee does not consider that these assertions by Mr Lonsdale assist in deciding the issues that have to be decided in relation to this challenge to the validity of the Election.

78. In the view of the Committee, Mr Lonsdale does not appear to understand the concept of undue influence, within the meaning of section 115(2)(b) of the RPA 1983.

Conclusions of the Committee

79. The Committee unanimously rejects the allegations made by Mr Lonsdale that the Registrar, or anyone else within the RCVS, has engaged in any conduct in relation to the Election that can be said to amount to undue influence within the meaning of section 115(2)(b) of the RPA 1983. There is no evidence whatsoever to support these allegations. On that ground alone, Mr Lonsdale's challenge to the validity of the Election is dismissed.
80. Mr Lonsdale has not sought to rely on paragraph 24(1)(a) of the Scheme, to the effect that the Election was not in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme. For the avoidance of doubt, the Committee finds no evidence that the Election was conducted otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme.
81. In any event, the Committee is not permitted by the provisions of the Scheme to declare the Election void unless it is satisfied (a) that the irregularity concerned rendered the Election substantially not in accordance with the Scheme; or (b) that the irregularity concerned significantly affected the result of the Election (see paragraph 24(7)).
82. On the Committee's findings, there was no irregularity in the conduct of the Election. If the Committee were found to be wrong about that, none of the matters complained about could be treated as rendering Election *substantially* not in accordance with the Scheme, because they did not affect the integrity of the Election process as a whole, and there was no departure from the principles of a free and fair Election (see *Morgan v Simpson*, above).
82. Alternatively, the Committee is completely satisfied that the matters complained of by Mr Lonsdale cannot reasonably be said to have significantly affected the result of the Election. The Legal Assessor has advised the Panel, and the Panel accepts, that the "result" of the election means the success of one candidate over another, and not the particular number of votes recorded for a particular candidate.
83. At this Election, Mr Lonsdale polled 496 votes, and candidate with the fewest votes who was elected polled 1,909 votes. The Committee has seen evidence which shows that Mr Lonsdale has stood in all Council Elections since 1997, and has come last every time, save for in 2017, when Mr Davies MRCVS came last. The Committee considers that it is inconceivable that Mr Lonsdale would have polled sufficient votes to be elected to Council, even if his candidate statement and biography had been published in an unedited form.
84. The Committee considers that this challenge to the validity of the 2017 Council Election is totally devoid of merit, and must be dismissed.

BY THE CHALLENGE COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2018

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25 July, 2017

By email: Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee: c.newbold@rcvs.org.uk

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UK

Dear Returning Officer,

As a candidate in the 2017 Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Elections and pursuant to *RCVS Council Election Scheme 1967, as amended in 2006* I wish to challenge the validity of the election as per Clause 24 – (1).

Please advise the timetable for submissions.

Please refer the matter to a fully independent and impartial Challenge Committee.

Please note that since 1991 I have been vocal in the public domain in my belief that the poisoning of pets (impairing health or occasioning premature death) by the junk pet-food industry in collusion with the veterinary profession represents unconscionable animal cruelty. The sale of harmful products, portrayed by most vets as being beneficial for animal health and welfare, is in my opinion a fraudulent activity and a criminal offence.

I have levelled my allegations against the British veterinary schools, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association. Accordingly, and for the removal of any apprehension of bias whether actual or perceived, I believe that no member of those universities or organisations should sit on the Challenge Committee.

Please accept this letter as my duly signed challenge.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Lonsdale



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6 August, 2017

By email: Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee: c.newbold@rcvs.org.uk

The Returning Officer
The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
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UK

Grounds for challenge to the validity of the 2017 RCVS Council election

For a successful challenge to the validity of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons election there must be evidence that the election was not a) in accordance with the provisions of the Election Scheme; or b) furthered by conduct, which if the election had been regulated by the *Representation of the People Act* 1983, would have been a corrupt practice by way of bribery, treating or undue influence under sections 113, 114 or 115 of that Act.

I wish to invoke Section 115 (1 & 2b) *Representation of the People Act* 1983.

115 Undue influence.

(1) A person shall be guilty of a corrupt practice if he is guilty of undue influence.

(2) A person shall be guilty of undue influence—

(b) if, by abduction, duress or any fraudulent device or contrivance, he impedes or prevents, or intends to impede or prevent, the free exercise of the franchise of an elector or proxy for an elector, or so compels, induces or prevails upon, or intends so to compel, induce or prevail upon, an elector or proxy for an elector either to vote or to refrain from voting.

Function of elections

A précis of the [Encyclopaedia Britannica list of functions](#) of elections includes the following functions in addition to the more recognised role of selecting individuals for office.

1. Facilitation of the expression of public opinion.
2. Political education of the electorate.
3. Facilitation of social and political integration.
4. Elections and the campaigns preceding them are dramatic events which call attention to the importance of participation in the event and an opportunity to express diversity.

As can be seen from the foregoing, elections are not just about separating winners from losers. Undue influence and restriction of the process inhibits the above functions, especially the educational aspect and thus becomes a significant and substantial factor regarding voter behaviour over time. In elections with small voter turnout a few votes either way are crucial.

Self-regulatory profession

Free and fair elections play a significant part in the 'self-regulatory' status of the veterinary profession within the regulatory framework of the *Veterinary Surgeons Act*, The Royal Charter of the RCVS and the Nolan Principles.

There is an inherent presumption that veterinary decisions are best carried out by those who have undertaken a long period of study. There's also an inherent assumption that vets will always and without fail serve the best interests of their patients and the wider community:

On admission to membership of the Royal College, veterinarians make the [undertaking](#):

I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will pursue the work of my profession with integrity and accept my responsibilities to the public, my clients, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and that, ABOVE ALL, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care.

[The Royal Charter of the RCVS](#) assigns the objects of the College: 'to set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest'. The Charter gives the College power to 'undertake any activities which seem to it necessary or expedient to help it to achieve its objects'.

Therein lays a presumption that the RCVS and its elected and un-elected representatives will perform to the highest standards of governance in keeping with the [Nolan Principles](#):

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Returning Officer not a vet

Although the Returning Officer is not a vet, I believe that the Officer is nevertheless bound by the Nolan Principles and the other principles as if he or she were a veterinarian. As a solicitor she has obligations to uphold the highest professional standards in law.

I acknowledge Section 11.-(4) of the Election Scheme that states:

This paragraph shall not require the Returning Officer to circulate an election statement which he reasonably considers to be defamatory or otherwise unlawful, or factually misleading, and may in the absence of agreement with the candidate either edit the election statement before circulating it or decide not to circulate it.

In order to meet the ‘reasonableness’ test I believe that the Returning Officer should issue rulings in an open and transparent manner and wherever possible refer to Acts and Statutes that underpin his or her ruling.

Further, insofar that the annual elections allow the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to be challenged on grounds of being unethical and corrupt, then it is incumbent on the Returning Officer to avoid actions that could be perceived as unethical or corrupt conduct or serve to cover up unethical or corrupt conduct.

Veterinary profession corruption

General abandonment of ethical, scientific and legal standards

I believe that the Election Challenge Committee needs a clear view of the widespread corruption, the context, in which the RCVS elections are fought. Armed with this understanding the Committee will be better placed to understand the motives and actions of the RCVS in regard to Council elections generally and to the 2017 election in particular.

In the first instance I offer *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health* as an overview of a profession that has lost its way. There are several indexed passages that refer to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

The boiling frog analogy holds true for the veterinary profession that now finds itself in very hot water — the crisis started slowly and grew over time.

Until the 1950s the veterinary profession mostly concerned itself with farm animals and horses. However with the disappearance of horse drawn transport and the industrialisation of farming, the need

for individual care of large animals waned. Gradually vets turned their attention to pets — pets that were already being fed industrial junk food.

Thanks to the promotion of pet ownership by the junk pet-food companies and thanks to the widespread diseases so arising out of a monotonous diet of junk food, there was plenty of work for the increasing ranks of small animal vets. (At that time infectious diseases and parasitism were also factors.) Veterinary treatments were less sophisticated and matters of diet scarcely considered except insofar that vitamin or mineral deficiencies occurred.

Under the insidious guidance of various junk pet-food manufacturers there was an acceptance that domestic carnivores should be fed out of the can and then in due course fed junk dry kibbles out of a bag. Propaganda not science prevailed and acceptance of junk food evolved such that the vet profession came to promote carbohydrate based, chemical laced junk food as the most suitable, most healthy food for carnivorous dogs and cats!

Nowadays there's extensive cross-promotion between the companies, veterinary institutions and veterinary practitioners. Some junk products are promoted — especially those sold by vets — as superior to all others. Simultaneously the natural diet of free living wild carnivores and feral domestic animals is vilified for a variety of trumped-up reasons. The essential medicinal aspects of a natural diet are ignored or obscured.

Compartmentalisation of thought and over servicing

Vets, though, tend not to be consistent and trim their sails according to the prevailing wind.

When advising farmers regarding production animals, the relative merits and disadvantages of artificial diets are openly considered. High concentrate feeding gives rise to metabolic diseases, immune suppression, lameness and other 'production' diseases in cattle. However economic meat, milk and hide production are the farmer's priorities. Large animal vets hold honest discussions with their clients regarding trade-offs between diet, productivity goals and animal health risks.

For zoo animals, animals for which a long healthy life is desirable, every effort is made to ensure a diet as close to that of animals in the wild. Zoo vets tend to combine *theory*, *practical know-how* and *experience*, founded on biological imperatives, when advising their clients. Whole carcasses of other animals provide the foundation of wild and zoo carnivore diets.

Unfortunately due to the culture prevalent in the veterinary schools and regulatory bodies, most vets graduate with *no theory*, *no practical know how* and definitely *no experience* of feeding domestic carnivores according to biological imperatives.

Of course vets are cognizant of the move against junk food and drinks for humans and the modern day promotion of the health benefits of unprocessed foods and drinks. They are also aware that much human dietary and dental advice derives from animal research experiments. But when it comes to domestic dogs (modified wolves), cats (modified desert predators) and ferrets (modified polecats) most vets ignore common sense and common knowledge about junk food diets. Instead they are emphatic that the natural carnivore diet should be *avoided* and that the animals should be fed grain (carbohydrate) based slops from the can or desiccated, compressed junk in the bag. It's 'Prescription

food', 'Scientifically Formulated' and 'Vet Recommended' they say as they seek to justify their over-inflated prices.

All wild creatures keep their teeth in good order by eating their appropriate foodstuffs. Small animal vets mostly ignore that edict and instead recommend tooth brushing and expensive surgical procedures. Clients are given no inkling that the white coated professional is peddling dangerous mythologies emanating from junk pet-food company and veterinary school propaganda mills.

Junk foods have many different adverse impacts on the health, vitality and longevity of pet carnivores. By virtue of most vets' refusal to remove the disease producing junk from their patients' diet, but at the same time embarking on massive over servicing then animals are needlessly tormented, nay tortured, to death. Simultaneously owners are fleeced of many thousands of pounds and subjected to constant anxiety regarding their chronically (sometimes acutely) ill pet.

Maria Kuljanic's cat provides a case in point. Ms Kuljanic suffered the severe misfortune of [consulting 20 vets indoctrinated in junk pet-food dogma](#). Her cat suffered the diabolical effects of a junk food diet, periodontal disease, obesity, diabetes and ultimately mouth cancer.

In my own practice every client is effectively seeking a second opinion. Never has a client received correct, biologically appropriate nutritional advice from their previous vet. Oftentimes the client arrives clutching many pages of case history — over-servicing writ large. Most often the animals need dental care and a change of diet. In many instances the improvements are immediate, impressive and long lasting. Animals suffering from diabetes or pancreatic insufficiency often make dramatic recoveries. [George the diabetic cat](#) is one such example.

[Elizabeth Farrelly writing in the Sydney Morning Herald](#) commented about her exorbitant vet fees and the junk food pushed by her vet:

Before remortgaging the house, I did what you do. Googled, found a website called [Raw Meaty Bones](#). The message was obvious and compelling. I decided to try it. For a month, I gave them each a daily, raw chicken wing. Period. Pretty soon both cats were bouncing. No trouble peeing. No bad-breath or sore inflamed gums. Their coats became thicker and glossier. Two happy cats.

Of course the majority of pets treated by conventional junk-food indoctrinated vets are wracked with pain. We made a video featuring Wally Muir ([Stop the Mass Poisoning of Pets by Vets](#)) who was at death's door until we removed all 42 of his teeth. He was just eight years old.

Of course I accept that veterinary opinions vary. However the issues under consideration do not fit into that limited category. All of modern day small animal medicine is predicated on the mass poisoning of pets by vets. (Poisons, by definition, reduce health or bring about premature death.)

By contrast naturally fed animals enjoy superb health and reach their full genetic potential. In 1993, in recognition of my work, I was asked to write the [definitive chapter on diet and oral disease](#) by Dr Douglas Bryden of Sydney University. In 2004 Dr Bryden and Dr Richard Malik nominated my work and the attached book *Raw Meaty Bones* for the [College Prize of the Australian College of Veterinary Science](#). In 2014 the [Australian Working Dog Rescue Group](#) nominated our practice for the Australian 'Most Supportive Vet' of the year award. Here is our [winning questionnaire](#).

RCVS Cover-up

History

Many small animal practitioners see the immense good health benefits of a natural diet for their carnivore patients. Consequently I receive consistent support from over 400 MsRCVS at [RCVS Council elections](#). That the RCVS refuses to acknowledge and investigate what I describe as the Mass Poisoning of Pets by Vets shows that *undue influence*, whether by errors of omission or commission, is at the core of the RCVS *modus operandi*.

The history of RCVS incompetence and corruption — and I believe the failure to meet the expected standards of a self-regulating profession — likely predates my standing for election. However it is the RCVS undue and improper influence in support of the junk pet-food culture at all times, during past elections and especially during the 2017 election that must occupy our thoughts now.

Subject matter at the core of my candidacy

Since 1992 I have had many interactions with the RCVS administration and quite a few Presidents. Most staff have been personable and the 2014 meeting with Professor Stuart Reid was enjoyable — although unsatisfactory. In general though, I consider the past Presidents and employed senior staff to be incompetent. I don't label any one individual corrupt. But I do say that taken together their conduct has either been corrupt or they have been engaged in covering up corruption.

It is enough for one pet owner to lodge a complaint against a vet alleging negligence and/or cruelty to an animal patient to initiate a full-blown investigation. Yet year after year [in RCVS elections](#), I have alleged that many thousands of vets have tortured millions of pets and have fleeced millions of pet owners. I have alleged that most if not all veterinary schools accredited by the RCVS are engaged in the unconscionable brainwashing of vulnerable vet students. Most of these so called centres of higher education have slimy deals with the multi-national junk pet-food producers Mars, Nestlé and Colgate-Palmolive.

Each year, for 21 successive years, around 9% of voters have supported my allegations. Yet despite the alleged massive criminality by vets regulated by the RCVS and trained in RCVS accredited institutions the RCVS Executive has maintained unyielding denial.

The information in *Raw Meaty Bones* and the following links give an inkling of the RCVS interactions and malfeasance since 1992.

Selected RCVS correspondence

[1992 President acknowledges and circulates Pandemic of Periodontal Disease \(Ref: Pandemic of Periodontal Disease: A malodorous condition\)](#) The monograph contains an eminent NSW lawyer's opinion on the serious illegality of the vet promotion of junk pet food.

[1995 Past President comments on Mars Inc influence in the veterinary profession.](#) Henry Carter acknowledged the Mars corporations undue influence, but sidestepped the obligations of the College.

[2004 Record of meeting with Professor Richard Halliwell, President of the RCVS](#) I informed Professor Halliwell that on the basis of our research I could confidently say that the veterinary profession is responsible for the mass poisoning of domestic pets. Professor Halliwell treated my comments with disdain. He did, as I recall, admit to having been paid by junk pet-food companies for research and opinion.

[2014 Freedom of Information Enquiry](#) The links in this document provide much useful background information 22 years after first alerting the President of the RCVS to the huge and still growing crisis.

[2014 Record of meeting with Professor S Reid, President of the RCVS](#) Prof Reid understood the gravity of the situation. As I recall he said ‘If only 10% of what you say is true then this is a very serious issue’. Of course I cannot stray even slightly from the 100% truth. The incompetence and corruption, as recognised by Professor Reid, is a gigantic issue.

[2016 Email Correspondence with journalist Sarah Kidby](#) This correspondence indicates the vet profession again putting up smoke screens. The fundamental issue of the mass poisoning of pets is obscured and denied. Simultaneously the profession generally and the RCVS particularly seeks to distract attention with ‘alternative facts’.

Whilst the Presidents and administrators have the main responsibility for the RCVS performance, I believe it’s instructive to consider the role of the other Council members. Twenty four members are elected. To my knowledge, not one of those elected this past 21 years has mentioned a word about the mass poisoning of pets, the fraudulent over-servicing of medical cases nor the brainwashing of students in corrupt veterinary schools.

Of the un-elected Councillors, the majority come from the UK veterinary schools. All schools brainwash their students to believe natural food is harmful and that junk food is the only sustenance needed by pets. In the absence of correct dietary advice, the students are brainwashed in the art and practice of over servicing. They are encouraged to preside over the life-long poisoning and thus cruel torture of the pets under their ‘care’.

Most perhaps all veterinary schools have corrupt arrangements with the multinational junk pet-food makers.

See improper junk pet-food influence on UK veterinary schools [here](#).

See improper junk pet-food influence on Australian veterinary schools [here](#).

Under these disgraceful conditions the lay members of the RCVS Council are helpless to protest.

Conduct of elections

If the RCVS is corrupt, and I believe that it is, then every act of omission or commission that furthers its corrupt objectives is, in my view, also corrupt. Similarly any act of omission or commission designed to cover up the fundamental corruption only serves to increase the seriousness of the corruption.

Throughout the 21 years that I have contested RCVS elections I have encountered varying degrees of obstruction. For several years I retained the services of specialist defamation lawyer [Richard Potter](#) in our attempts to demonstrate to the RCVS that their arguments about my manifestos being libellous were without foundation.

In this 2017 election, the year subject to the Challenge, I did not consult Mr Potter. The [Correspondence re Biography and Manifesto](#) reveals the arbitrary nature of the RCVS rulings. (My Biography and Manifesto as submitted can be found [here](#).)

There were four key decisions made by the Returning Officer that I believe had an undue influence on the 2017 RCVS Election under the terms of the *Representation of the People Act*.

1. Summary denial of hypertext links in the online manifesto.
2. The removal of names of pet-food manufacturers that are currently the subject of a Class Action legal case in the USA.
3. The refusal to host my RCVS Q&A video.
4. Double standards for favoured candidates.

I will detail these in turn.

1. Summary denial of hypertext links in the online manifesto

From 2007 to 2013 links were permissible in both the online and paper versions of the [Biography and Manifesto](#). In an increasingly digital age it was a natural progression into the 21st Century for the RCVS to adopt this function within manifestos. The electorate could thereby gain a better understanding of the candidates and cross-check any electioneering statements. This was especially relevant for candidates such as me wishing to promote new, creative, beneficial but otherwise obscured and controversial ideas.

The drawback, at least in the printed version, was that expanded html links took up space — one link potentially taking as much space as several words.

In my published [2014 online manifesto](#) there are no links. I believe that it was about this time that the expanded links were discontinued from both printed and online documentation. However, Mr Hockey the Registrar, subsequently agreed that ‘hotlinks’ within the text were permissible as a means to better inform the electorate.

My [2015 and 2016 online](#) manifestos both contain ‘hotlinks’. The 2016 Candidate Guidance form contained the statement: ‘Links to websites etc are not permitted.’ Clearly, however, the Returning Officer treated that ruling as only being applicable to the printed version.

It is true that other candidates have tended not to employ links in their election material — although of course they were free to do so.

In 2017 the Returning Officer, without any discussion, [took the retrograde step](#) of banning online links.

After ten years of permitting links, the RCVS now stymies proper in-depth discussion of any subject, but particularly the subjects that the veterinary press, the universities and vet associations seek to suppress.

Seen in context of their interdependent relationship with the junk food makers, veterinary schools and veterinary associations, I believe this action of the RCVS to be an example of their exercising undue and improper influence

2. The removal of names of pet-food manufacturers that are currently the subject of a Class Action legal case in the USA

A pet-owner [\\$Multi-Billion Class Action](#) has been launched in the USA against [Mars Petcare](#); [Nestlé](#) [Purina](#), [Hill's Pet Nutrition](#), [PetSmart](#), [Banfield Pet Hospitals](#) and [Blue Pearl Specialist Centres](#). This is a matter of public knowledge and is widely discussed in pet-owner circles. That the RCVS deems that this information should not be made known to MsRCVS in the course of an election beggars belief.

Are the sensibilities of vets too delicate for discussion of these robust issues?

How could the named companies possibly object to re-publication of a news item? If they are innocent they will surely welcome their day in court.

A much more sinister issue arises. The RCVS enjoys privileged status as the self-regulatory body for the veterinary profession. Over two decades the RCVS has refused to acknowledge concerns about the mass poisoning of pets and the defrauding of pet-owners as is now countenanced in the USA Class Action.

Now in the face of the Class Action, the RCVS seeks to suppress the details and thereby assist the accused junk pet-food companies and their acolytes.

This appears as another instance of the RCVS exercising undue, improper influence on behalf of its friends and the benefactors of its friends in the universities, the British Veterinary Association and British Small Animal Veterinary Association.

3. The refusal to host my Q&A video

The [Correspondence re Video](#) reveals that I submitted my 2017 video early. Unfortunately the RCVS response arrived after an unnecessary delay:

Broadly the video is fine – we have just one area that causes some concern. In the answer to your second question, you mentioned governing bodies in the plural (around 1m 08s into the video and thereafter in your answer to that question) and refer to them in various terms including that they are corrupt. While robust criticism of the RCVS would be a matter for us in these election videos, we are concerned that you may have, even if inadvertently, been making the same assertions about other governing bodies that apply to you and such defamatory comment should be excluded.

Apart from being disadvantaged by insufficient time to make the changes, it's my contention as per the [Correspondence re Video](#) that no changes were necessary. Throughout the 21 years that I have

contested RCVS elections I have mounted vigorous criticism of the veterinary establishment as illustrated by this passage from my 2010 biography and manifesto:

Since 1992 I have worked to solve the gravest issue facing pet health and the veterinary profession in the 21st century.

From the outset a corrupt veterinary establishment fought back. I was subjected to several bogus disciplinary actions and threatened with jail.

According to the RCVS it seems that the veterinary establishment can launch bogus disciplinary actions, whilst I as a candidate in 2017 am not allowed to point out in general terms the possibility that veterinary organisations are suspect, even corrupt.

Again it appears to me that the RCVS abuses its power to gain undue, improper influence. (The collection of banned RCVS videos, including the 2017 video can be found [here](#).)

4. Double standards for favoured candidates

The RCVS ruling on naming companies in the manifesto and the RCVS ruling regarding the video reveal a double-standard in their effort to suppress the names of companies as per this quote:

The feedback that I have received from the Registrar is that she felt that organisations were implicitly identifiable in the video even if they were not directly named. In UK defamation law it is not necessary for an organisation or individual to be directly named in order for it to be defamatory – it is enough that the material can be reasonably understood to be referring to a particular individual or organisation.

Despite this ruling about my video, the RCVS approved the publication of two videos containing highly disparaging remarks about readily identifiable veterinary surgeons who practise Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine (CAVM).

Miss Sarah Brown video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFEuVExqr70>

Mr Danny Chambers video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDu8zfUdDyI>

It's instructive to note that whether aided by their videos or due to other attributes the authors of the videos finished second and third in the ballot and now sit on the Council of the RCVS.

I should declare that I hold no brief for Complementary and Alternative Veterinary Medicine modalities. However I am aware that much in this world remains to be investigated and understood; that there are veterinary surgeons who have made discoveries and will continue to make discoveries of immense benefit to animals, animal owners and the wider community, but which discoveries often run counter to conventional wisdom.

At the 2017 elections the RCVS favoured two candidates who show a crusading zeal in their efforts to persecute a small group of fellow vets on mere matters of CAVM opinion. Simultaneously the RCVS hampered my attempts to disseminate information on systematic incompetence and corruption affecting the integrity and standing of the entire profession.

I suggest that the RCVS is engaged in systematic corruption, employs double standards and employed undue influence.

Conclusion

It would seem that the RCVS has predetermined views, is markedly out of step with community values, shows distinct bias and has exerted Undue Influence in support of those who wish to maintain the *status quo*.

It is my contention that any Undue Influence exercised by a demonstrably corrupt RCVS has significant and or substantial effects as per the functions and purposes of elections as mentioned above.

Accordingly I believe that the Challenge Committee should void the 2017 RCVS Council Election result and call for new, free and fair elections.

Signed,



Tom Lonsdale

Attached: Electronic copy of *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health*



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22 December 2017

Chloe Newbold
Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee

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By email only: c.newbold@rcvs.org.uk

Dear Chloe,

Re: Lonsdale v RCVS – Challenge to the validity of the 2017 Council Election
Final written submission

Introduction

No ‘ifs’, no ‘buts’, no ‘maybes’; forcing pet carnivores to survive on industrial junk falsely labelled as ‘food’ amounts to intolerable animal cruelty. That the veterinary profession, supposedly regulated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, actively encourages the mass torture of animals represents a most disgraceful phase in veterinary history.

The RCVS demonstrates that it understands the magnitude of the allegations in its [23 November 2017 Final Submission](#), paragraph 21:

Mr Lonsdale’s submission is premised on his view that the veterinary profession as a whole is corrupt and involved in a conspiracy with pet food manufacturers to promote pet food that is injurious to animals. He contends that the RCVS has been involved in a cover up and that the RCVS’s refusal “to acknowledge and investigate what I describe as the Mass Poisoning of Pets by Vets shows that undue influence, whether by errors of omission or commission, is at the core of the RCVS modus operandi” (p.6). He invites the Challenge Committee to accept his assertions that the RCVS is either corrupt or involved in corruption and then go on to find that the RCVS’s actions during the election process were in furtherance of these corrupt objectives or in order to cover up corruption (p. 7).

I say that overwhelming evidence supports the veracity of my claims. Millions of pets are sick and millions of pet owners are fleeced by their vets by virtue of ineffectual treatments and massive over servicing when a simple change of diet* is all that is required to make the animals well.

Unfortunately the RCVS Council and Executive is made up of University appointees and vets who have:

- i.) no understanding of the theory of carnivore feeding,
- ii.) no practical know-how and consequently
- iii.) no experience.

Their predetermined junk pet-food industry inculcated views about the supposed superiority of junk in the bag and can are truly frightening.

Prior to lodging my challenge [I asked the RCVS](#) to ensure that an unbiased, fully independent committee be formed to review my challenge. In the event the RCVS appointed a committee of insiders — typical RCVS faulty decision making writ large.

I asked the Committee to recuse themselves on the very clear evidence that they had allegiances to corrupt veterinary schools and of course allegiance to the incompetent and corrupt RCVS.

Despite the overwhelming evidence the Committee members refused to recuse themselves.

On 23 November 2017 the RCVS made its [final submission](#), drafted by a large legal firm, in defence of the allegations.

It is instructive to note that since 1992, [when first notified](#), the RCVS has done nothing to investigate the mass poisoning of pets. But when I seek to draw to the attention of the RCVS the dreadful plight of animals, the defrauding of pet owners and the defrauding of veterinary students in RCVS accredited vet schools, the RCVS rather than investigate, arranges a fighting force of expensive lawyers to defend their deplorable conduct.

Vets who accept my assertions

Although the RCVS Executive and Council refuse to accept my assertions I maintain that they are on the wrong side of history.

At the 2017 RCVS Elections 496 Members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons supported [the proposition](#):

That any vet denigrates a natural diet and simultaneously insists that pets should be fed artificial junk — junk contravening basic biological principles — beggars belief.

We have no means of knowing the identity of those 496 voters. We do know, however, the names of the three [Directors of the University of Sydney, Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science](#) who have endorsed the wide ranging and general thrust of my arguments as provided in *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health* (Annexure to Challenge Document)

[Dr Michelle Cotton BVSc BScVet MVPHMgt](#)

Raw Meaty Bones: The Book

Ever since his first contribution to a *Control & Therapy* ([#3128 December 1991](#)) on the subject of feeding dogs and cats raw food I have observed the progress of Dr Tom Lonsdale with great interest.

I remember the effect on me then was comforting, encouraging and supportive. I lived and worked as a practitioner in a developing country. It was a country where man-made pet food was only sporadically available and expensive when it could be found at all. It was important to have someone out there reminding me not to feel completely helpless and, more importantly, useless.

In terms of the advice veterinarians are asked to give, advice on nutrition must be amongst the commonest of topics. As one knows, your advice comes from several sources. It can come as a result of “keeping up to date” with the latest findings on a subject, it can come from attending lectures and courses. Advice can come as a result of wide reading and access to the complete range of opinions on a subject and it can come subliminally through reading the latest journal and flipping past the advertisements.

Over the years many humans have been made to feel inadequate for failing to provide their families or pets with “the best” as decreed by myriad marketing campaigns. In this frenetic age it is so easy to fall into the trap of believing there is only ONE WAY of looking after those you love most. For one reason or another it may not always be possible for people to commit to a total reliance on commercially prepared food.

If nothing else, Tom’s philosophy has explained some very practical alternatives to this. I liked to think that many of my clients walked out of my surgery feeling better about their capacity to care for their pets after being told that dogs and cats never cooked their food until humans came along. When Tom Lonsdale came along he made me feel better too!

Tom Lonsdale has now published his book “*Raw Meaty Bones*” and consequently kept the fires of his passion for this subject burning as brightly as ever. This Don Quixote of Dog Food has kept his quest alive and now stands to enjoy the credit for having had the courage of his convictions.

If you provide nutritional advice to your clients and keep a supply of brochures and client information sheets for them then be consistent and add this book to your shelves. Making this and Dr Ian Billinghurst’s books available for clients to read alongside other nutritional fact sheets emphasises your commitment to encouraging choice and the dissemination of information. It is a wonderful opportunity to retain the reputation for scientific thought and deed in our profession.

Keep searching, keep probing, keep questioning, keep thinking, keep vigilant.
If, for no other reason, consider reading or purchasing Tom’s book because for sure your clients will. Keep up with your clients!

The book is a scientific thriller, set out to encompass the evolution of Dr Lonsdale’s theories on animal nutrition and also to describe the reaction of the general public and the Veterinary profession to his early writings.

Michele Cotton
Associate Director, Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science
February 2002

Dr Douglas Bryden AM MACVSc FACVSc(hc)

Dear Tom,

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your book and for your generous letter which accompanied it.

Your book is a testament to your wisdom and your courage, and I am reading it from cover to cover. I have learnt much already which I did not know before and I am recalling some detail from your writing which is focusing my mind in areas where I need to be better informed. I am obtaining new insights and I am sure that there will be segments I will want to read again or to use as a reference when I have finished the book.

My role in the events so far was small; however I am proud to be mentioned in your book and to have been able to be even a minor player. There is of course much still to be done, some of which will flow on naturally from your example. I would like to think that there will be many who will take up the challenge in the future.

Congratulations on the publishing of an important book which, if I may say, has some bite in it. Every graduate and undergraduate veterinarian should read the book for it has the potential to challenge the things they believe to be true, and gives them the wonderful opportunity to step back from themselves and to look more dispassionately and more deeply at the science they practise and to realise how important it is to listen carefully to others who may have a pearl of wisdom to share.

Warmest regards

Doug

Dr Douglas Bryden AM
Veterinary Educator and Consultant
21 August 2001

Dr Tom Hungerford OBE, BVSc., FACVSc., HAD

Dear Tom,

Thanks for the book - BRAVO

Tell the people who won't review their views that: 'The foolish and the dead never change their opinions.' Maybe that is an overstatement - as the 'brain-dead' may also refuse to revise.

Anyhow there are many who adopt the stance of: 'Don't confuse me with facts, my mind is made up.'

Congratulations on the book.

Tom Hungerford
3 October 2001

Recusal of the Committee

On the evidence provided by the Legal Assessor and each of the Challenge Committee members it appears that they are confused by facts, their minds made up and as such are unfit to sit in judgement on this important Challenge to the validity of the 2017 RCVS Election.

Accordingly I believe that they should, as a priority, recuse themselves and make way for fully independent, impartial members of the Committee.

Conclusion

My [2017 RCVS Manifesto](#) called on voters to:

Cast your vote signalling your desire for a veterinary community worthy to be called a profession.

For the future, when this Challenge to the validity of the 2017 RCVS Election is behind us, we will still be faced with the task of making the veterinary community worthy to be called a profession.

The Challenge Committee, however it is constituted, has an opportunity to offset past harm and do some lasting good. The Committee can help broker peace and set up a constructive dialogue for the benefit of animals, animal owners, the veterinary profession and wider community.

In a spirit of cooperation I am ready to assist and hope for your positive response.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Lonsdale

*A natural diet, as defined by evolution, is the most effective treatment *and preventative* for junk food induced diseases.

