

SCANNED TEXT OF THE RCVS CHARTER OF 1844 (HEADINGS ADDED)

Note: the side headings in the following text and the division into paragraphs do not form part of the original Charter but have been added as aids to navigation.

CHARTER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

Salutation

VICTORIA, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Petitioners

WHEREAS our loving subjects, THOMAS TURNER, of No. 311, Regent Street, in the County of Middlesex, and of Croydon, in the County of Surrey, Veterinary Surgeon; WILLIAM JOSEPH GOODWIN, of Queen's Mews, Pimlico, in the said County of Middlesex, Veterinary Surgeon; THOMAS MAYER, the elder, of Newcastle-under-Lyme, in the County of Stafford, Veterinary Surgeon; WILLIAM DICK, of Edinburgh, in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, Veterinary Surgeon; WILLIAM SEWELL, of the Royal Veterinary College, Camden Town, in the County of Middlesex, Veterinary Surgeon; CHARLES SPOONER, of No. 1, Great College Street, St. Pancras, in the said County of Middlesex, Veterinary Surgeon; and JAMES BEART SIMONDS, of No. 9, Great College Street, Saint Pancras, aforesaid, Veterinary Surgeon, Members of the Royal Veterinary College of London, have, by their Petition, humbly represented unto us,

Recitation of petitioners' grounds for seeking Charter

That the Royal Veterinary College of London, and the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, have been established for many years for the education of students of the veterinary art; That our said Petitioners have been pupils at the said Royal Veterinary College of London; That the said Royal Veterinary College of London was established in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, and has been patronised by our royal predecessors, and now enjoys our royal patronage; That the said College was instituted to improve the veterinary art which had been theretofore practised generally by ignorant and incompetent persons, which had been long and universally complained of; That Parliament, being fully convinced of the propriety of such an institution as the Royal Veterinary College of London, and of the national benefits to be derived from it, has munificently (when required) granted aid to that

establishment; That our said petitioners humbly submitted that the institution of the Royal Veterinary College had been of great advantage to the Country and to our royal army, and the utility of it had been so highly estimated, that some years ago a board of general officers was appointed to take the utility of the said institution into consideration, and they reported that the loss of horses accruing to our cavalry, which had been theretofore very heavy, was principally owing to the total ignorance of those who, previously to the appointment of veterinary surgeons educated at the said Veterinary College, had had the medical care of them; That for the instruction of the pupils of the said Veterinary College, a professor, an assistant professor, and other proper officers, are appointed, so as to form a school of veterinary art, in which the anatomical structure of horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, and other domesticated animals, the diseases to which they are subject, and the remedies proper to be applied, are investigated and regularly taught, and that by these means enlightened practitioners of liberal education are dispersed over our kingdom; That our said Petitioners had been at considerable expense in payment of the necessary fees on entry as pupils at the said Royal Veterinary College, and to the different lectures on anatomy, pathology, surgery, and chemistry, during their probation at the said College, in which they remained until from the Medical Examining Committee (which consisted of the most eminent physicians and surgeons, teachers of the various branches of medical science in London) they had obtained a proper certificate or diploma, and were considered qualified to practise the veterinary art; That our said Petitioners had all obtained such certificate or diplomas, and that nearly one thousand members, who had been graduated at the Veterinary Colleges of London and Edinburgh, are now practising as veterinary surgeons in our dominions, and that their practice, under the blessing of Divine Providence, tended greatly to the alleviation of the sufferings of those animals confided to their care; That the veterinary art is not recognised by law as a profession; That owing to our said Petitioners not participating in the privileges and exemptions which have been granted to the medical and other professions, much injury has arisen to themselves in the course of their practice, as well as loss to their employers; That our said Petitioners are so fully occupied in the discharge of the duties of their profession, and they are so continually at the call of the public as to be very ill qualified to discharge with due regard to the interests of the public, the parochial and other services which the law at present enforces on them; and that, considering the progress already made in the advancement of the veterinary art by the superior education and attainment of veterinary practitioners, our said Petitioners humbly submit that considerable advantages would accrue to our subjects generally by enabling our said Petitioners and others constituting the body of veterinary surgeons to possess privileges from which they have been hitherto excluded; and Our said Petitioners being convinced that the sanction of our Royal Charter of Incorporation would materially contribute to the advancement of the veterinary art and the respectability of the veterinary practitioners, have humbly prayed that we should grant to them, and to such other persons as now are certificated members of the Royal Veterinary College of London, or of the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, our Royal Charter of Incorporation, that they might from thenceforth be one body politic and corporate, by the name and title of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, with such rights,

powers, privileges, franchises, and immunities, as are hereinafter expressed, and that the veterinary art might henceforth be recognised by law as a profession:

Incorporation of Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE, that we, being desirous to encourage a design so laudable, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, HAVE willed, granted, ordained, and declared, and DO, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, will, grant, ordain, and declare, that the said Thomas Turner, William Joseph Goodwin, Thomas Mayer, William Dick, William Sewell, Charles Spooner, and James Beart Simonds, together with such others of our loving subjects as now hold certificates of qualification to practise as veterinary surgeons granted by the Royal Veterinary College of London, or by the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, respectively, and such other persons as respectively now are, and may hereafter become, students of the Royal Veterinary College of London, or of the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, or of such other Veterinary College, corporate or unincorporate, as now is or hereafter shall be established for the purposes of education in veterinary surgery whether in London or elsewhere in our United Kingdom, and which we, or our Royal successors, shall under our or their sign manual authorise in that behalf, and shall pass such examination as may be required by the orders, rules, and bye-laws which shall be framed and confirmed pursuant to these presents, shall by virtue of these presents be members of and form one body politic and corporate, by the name of "THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS," by which name they shall have perpetual succession, and a common seal, with full power and authority to alter, vary, break, and renew the same at their discretion, and by the same name to sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, and answer and be answered unto in every court of US, our heirs, and successors, and be for ever able and capable in the law to purchase, receive, and possess, to them and their successors, any goods and chattels, or other personal property whatsoever; and shall have full power and authority to sell and dispose of any goods and chattels, or other personal property, so to be by them acquired; and to act and do in all things relating to the said body politic and corporate as fully and effectually to all intents, effects, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, as any other of our liege subjects, or any other body politic and corporate in our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, not being under any disability, might do in their respective concerns:

Recognition of veterinary art as a profession, title of veterinary surgeon

AND WE DO FURTHER DECLARE AND GRANT, That the veterinary art as practised by the members of the said body politic and corporate shall be henceforth deemed and taken to be and recognised as a profession, and that the members of the said body politic and corporate solely and exclusively of all other persons whomsoever shall be deemed and taken and recognised to be members of the said profession or professors of the said art, and shall be individually known and distinguished by the name or title of veterinary surgeons:

General meetings and council, composition of council

AND WE DO FURTHER DECLARE AND GRANT, That general meetings of the said body politic and corporate shall from time to time be held; and that there shall always be a council to direct and manage the concerns of the said body politic and corporate, and that the council shall consist of not more than thirty-one nor less than twenty-four members, of whom one shall be president; six shall be vice-presidents, and one shall be secretary; and the members of the council, the president, and vice-presidents, with the exception of the first president, who is appointed by these presents, shall be severally elected and appointed in manner hereinafter mentioned:

Appointment of first president

AND WE DO HEREBY APPOINT, That the said Thomas Turner shall be the first president of the said body politic and corporate; and that he shall remain the president until some other person is elected in his place or stead as hereinafter mentioned:

Election of subsequent presidents, vice-presidents and members of council

AND WE DO FURTHER DECLARE, That the president, vice-presidents, and members of the council, shall be elected from and amongst the members of the said body politic and corporate:

First general meeting

AND WE FURTHER DIRECT, That within four months from the date of these presents the first general meeting of the members of the body politic and corporate shall be held, and such meeting shall be held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the said county of Middlesex; and the said first president of the said body politic and corporate, or in the case of his death the others or other of our aforesaid Petitioners, or the major part of them, or the survivor of them, if but one of them shall be then living, shall fix the day and hour for holding the said general meeting, and shall convene the same by advertisements published in the London Gazette, and in two or more London and Dublin daily newspapers, and in two or more Edinburgh papers, at least twenty-one days, and not more than thirty days, before the time of holding such general meeting, and in each advertisement the object of such meeting and the time of holding the same shall be stated; and at such meeting twenty-four members of the said body politic and corporate shall be elected members of the council, and such first general meeting may adjourn from time to time, and for such time as such first general meeting or any adjournment thereof shall think proper; and every such adjourned meeting shall be considered a continuance of such first general meeting:

Convening of annual general meetings and other general meetings, quorum for general meetings

AND WE DO FURTHER DIRECT, That on the first Monday in the month of May, one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, and on the first Monday in the month of May in every subsequent year, an annual general meeting of the members of the said body politic and corporate shall be held at some place within the city of London or Westminster, or the suburbs thereof; and every annual or other general meeting of the members of the body shall be convened by the council by advertisements published in the London Gazette, and in such two or more London and Dublin daily newspapers, and in two or more Edinburgh papers, as the council shall think fit, at least twenty one days, and not more than thirty days, before the time of holding the same; and in each advertisement the object of such general meeting, and the day, hour, and place of meeting, shall be specified; and the annual general meetings and the adjournments thereof shall be held, and the business to be done thereat shall be transacted, whatever may be the number of members present thereat, but no business shall be transacted at any other general meeting of the members of the body politic and corporate unless ten or more members shall be present; and every annual or other general meeting may adjourn to such time as the original meeting or any adjournment thereof shall think proper; and every adjourned meeting shall be considered a continuance of the meeting from which the adjournment took place, and no business shall be transacted at any adjourned meeting except the business left unfinished at the general meeting from which the adjournment took place:

Election of council members

AND WE DO HEREBY FURTHER DIRECT AND DECLARE, That with the exception of the persons to be elected at the first general meeting of the members of the said body politic and corporate as hereinbefore is mentioned, and of the person hereinbefore appointed the first president of the said body politic and corporate, and of the persons who shall be appointed presidents and vice-presidents as hereinafter directed, and of the persons who shall be appointed temporary members of the council as hereinafter also is mentioned, the members of the council shall be elected at the annual general meetings, and that the president and vice-presidents shall be ex officio members of the council; and that on the day on which the annual general meeting in the month of May, one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, and on the day on which the annual general meeting shall be held in every subsequent year, the president and vice-presidents and six members of the council, and also the secretary, shall go out of office; but any president or vice-president who shall have been appointed from amongst the members of the council, and any secretary, shall not by reason of his going out of office as president, or vice-president, or secretary, cease to be a member of the council; and that any member of the said body politic and corporate, whether for the time being a member of the council or not, shall be eligible to be appointed to the office of president or vice-president, and that the secretary shall at all times be appointed from the members of the council: and that for the purpose of determining the six members of the council who are to go out of office

on the days on which the annual general meetings in the month of May, in the years one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, and one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight, shall be held, the names of the persons to be elected members of the council at the first general meeting of the body politic and corporate as hereinbefore is mentioned, shall be inserted in a list in regular order according to the dates of the respective certificates of qualifications granted by the Royal Veterinary College of London, or by the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, or of such other Veterinary College as hereinbefore mentioned, as the case may be, commencing with the name of that person who according to the date of his certificate shall appear to have last obtained such certificate, and ending with the name of the person who shall according to the date of his certificate appear first to have obtained such certificate; and in those cases where the certificates of two or more of such persons shall be dated on the same day, the person in the chair at such first general meeting shall determine by lot the order in which the name of such two or more persons shall be inserted in such list; and after such list shall have been completed the members so elected at the said first general meeting shall be divided into four classes consisting of six each, taking them in the order in which their names shall have been arranged on the said list, the first six names in the list forming the first class, the second six names in the said list forming the second class, the third six names in the said list forming the third class, and the last six names in the said list forming the fourth class; and the members whose names are mentioned in the first class shall be those to go out of office on the day on which the annual general meeting in one thousand eight hundred and forty five shall be held, and the members whose names are mentioned in the second class shall be those to go out of office on the day on which the annual general meeting in one thousand eight hundred and forty six shall be held, and the members whose names are mentioned in the third class shall be those to go out of office on the day on which the annual general meeting in one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven shall be held, and the members whose names are mentioned in the fourth class shall be those to go out of office on the day on which the annual general meeting in one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight shall be held; and on the day on which the annual general meeting in the month of May shall be held in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-nine, and in every subsequent year, the six members of the council to go out of office shall be the six who shall have been longest in office; and that on the day on which the annual general meeting shall be held in the month of May, one thousand eight hundred and forty five, and in every subsequent year, six new members of the council shall be elected, and that the members of the council for the time being going out of office shall be considered to be re-eligible to that office, either immediately or at any time afterwards; and that upon any vacancy in the office of member of the council from any cause except that of going out by rotation, the same shall be filled up at the first annual general meeting of the members of the body politic and corporate which shall be held after the vacancy shall have occurred; and the council may, if it shall be deemed advisable, appoint some person to fill that vacancy until the day on which the first annual general meeting after the vacancy shall have occurred shall be held, and every person so appointed by the council shall cease to be a member of the council on the

day on which such annual general meeting shall be held, and the vacancy shall be filled up at such annual general meeting to all intents and purposes as if the council had not appointed anyone to fill that vacancy: Provided, nevertheless, that in case any person shall cease to be a member of the council before the day on which the annual general meeting in the month of May in any year shall be held, at which he would have been one of the members to have gone out of office, then such vacancy shall not be filled up, but such person shall be considered as one of the members for the time being going out of office on that day; and that in case any occasional vacancy or vacancies in the office of member of the council shall be to be filled up at any annual general meeting, then and in such case the annual general meeting shall elect such number of persons to the office of member of the council as shall be sufficient to make up the number of members of the council to twenty four, exclusive of ex officio members, without specifying which of the persons so elected shall supply the occasional vacancy or vacancies to be filled up, or which of them shall fill up the vacancies occasioned by going out of office annually by rotation; and immediately after such election the person in the chair at such annual general meeting shall determine by lot which of the persons elected shall supply the occasional vacancy or vacancies to be filled up at such annual general meeting, and which of them shall supply the place of the person, or of each of the persons, who shall have occasioned such occasional vacancy or vacancies, and shall forthwith declare the person or persons so determined upon elected accordingly, and the other persons elected at such annual general meeting shall thereupon be declared by the person in the chair at such annual general meeting elected to supply the vacancies occasioned by going out annually by rotation; and that every person who in consequence of an occasional vacancy shall be elected a member of the council shall be only a substitute for the person, whose place he may supply, and shall continue in office only for the same period as the person whose place he may supply would have continued if he had not vacated the office before the time at which he must necessarily have gone out of office; and that at every annual general meeting the president, vice-presidents, and other members of the council, going out of office on the day on which such annual general meeting shall for the time being be held, shall for all the purposes of such meeting be considered president, vice-presidents, and members of council, in office until the meeting shall break up or adjourn, and that all elections of members of council shall be by ballot, to be taken at the general meeting; and that when and so often as on the election of any member of the council votes shall be given for more persons than there shall be vacancies, and, in consequence of any two or more persons having an equal number of votes, it cannot be determined which of such two or more persons shall be the persons or person to supply the vacancy or vacancies, the person in the chair at the annual general meeting at which such election shall take place shall forthwith decide by lot which of those two or more persons shall supply the vacancy or vacancies, and the person or persons in whose favour such decision shall be made shall be considered duly elected; that any president, vice-president, or member of the council for the time being may at any time vacate his office by sending in his resignation in writing to the council, and any general meeting specially called for the purpose may remove from his office any president, vice-president, or member of the council for misconduct, or other reasonable cause:

Convening of council meetings, quorum for council meetings, election of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer

AND WE DO HEREBY FURTHER GRANT AND DECLARE, That the members for the time being of the council shall assemble together at some place in London or Westminster or the suburbs thereof, at such times as they shall be convened by the secretary, and every such meeting shall be called a council; and that no business shall be transacted at any council unless seven or more members of the council shall be present at the discussion of such business, and at the time when a decision shall take place on the whole and every part of such business; and that the first meeting of the council shall be held before the expiration of one calendar month after the holding of the first general meeting of the members of the body politic and corporate, and the election of twenty-four members of the council thereat, pursuant to the direction hereinbefore contained; and at such first meeting of the council six vice-presidents, one secretary, and one treasurer of the said body politic and corporate, shall be appointed; and that before the expiration of one calendar month after the day on which the annual general meeting in the month of May, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty five, and in every subsequent year, a meeting of the council shall be held; and at each such last-mentioned council, one president, six vice-presidents, and one secretary, shall be appointed; and in case any vacancy shall happen in the office of president, vice-president, or secretary, from any cause except that of going out of office annually, the same shall be filled up by the council with all convenient speed, and the persons to be appointed president, vice-presidents, or secretary, shall be decided by ballot, and the council may at pleasure remove any secretary or treasurer from his office, and may appoint any person to be treasurer in the place of any treasurer so removed from his office:

Proceedings of general meetings and council meetings

AND WE DO HEREBY FURTHER DIRECT AND DECLARE, That all questions relating to any business to be transacted at any general meeting and at any council shall be decided on by a majority of the members present and entitled to vote thereat respectively; and that the person to be in the chair at every general meeting, and at every council, shall be the president, or if he shall be absent, or shall decline to take the chair, then one of the vice-presidents to be elected at the meeting shall take the chair, or if they shall be all absent, or such of them as shall be present shall decline to take the chair, then one of the other members of the council to be elected at the meeting shall take the chair; and in the case of a general meeting, if the president, vice-presidents, and members of the council shall be all absent, or such of them as shall be present shall decline to take the chair, then one of the other members of the body politic and corporate present to be elected at the general meeting shall take the chair:

Minutes of general meetings and council meetings

AND WE DO HEREBY FURTHER WILL, GRANT, AND DECLARE, That minutes of the proceedings at every general meeting of the members of the said body politic and corporate, and at every meeting of the council, shall be entered in a book to be kept for that purpose, and shall be signed by the person in the chair at such general meeting or council, and the secretary or one of them; and the book purporting to be so signed shall be evidence that the proceedings of which the minutes purporting to be so signed as aforesaid, shall be entered therein, were regular in every respect, and took place at a general meeting or council as the case may be, duly held and convened, and that the persons or person whose names or name are or is subscribed to the minutes entered in such book was the proper persons or person to authenticate such minutes, and that they or he signed the same; and such book shall be binding and conclusive on the said body politic and corporate, and all the members thereof:

Conduct of College business: employment of staff, making of orders, rules & bye-laws for management of property, for council meetings and for examinations

AND WE DO HEREBY FURTHER WILL, GRANT, AND DECLARE, That the council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns, and property of the said body politic and corporate, and shall and may from time to time nominate and appoint such persons to be officers and servants for carrying on and executing the necessary affairs and concerns of the said body politic and corporate as the council shall think proper, and shall and may at pleasure, from time to time, remove such officers and servants, or any of them, and allow them such salaries, wages, or compensation, as the council shall think fit; and also shall and may make any orders, rules, and bye-laws, for the regulation of the council, and for the management of the estates, goods, effects, and property of the said body politic and corporate, and for fixing and determining the times and places of meeting of the council, and also the times and places and manner of examining students who shall have been educated at the Royal Veterinary College of London, or the Veterinary College of Edinburgh, or such other veterinary colleges as hereinbefore mentioned, and who may be desirous to become members of the said body politic and corporate, and for regulating the nature and extent of such examinations, and for the appointment of persons to examine and determine upon the fitness and qualifications of such students, and for the admission or rejection of such students as members of the said body politic and corporate, and for fixing and determining the sum and sums of money to be paid by such students, either previous to their examinations, or upon their admission as members of the said body politic and corporate, or otherwise, and generally touching all other matters relating to and connected with the said body politic and corporate; and the same orders, rules, and bye-laws, from time to time, to alter, suspend, or repeal, and to make new orders, rules, and bye-laws, in their stead, as the council shall think most proper and expedient, so as the same be not repugnant to these presents or the laws of this our realm:

Exclusion of professors of veterinary colleges from acting as examiners, right of successful candidates to become members of RCVS

BUT, NEVERTHELESS, WE DO HEREBY EXPRESSLY DECLARE AND ENJOIN, That no professor of any or either of such colleges as aforesaid, of which the person desirous of becoming a member of the said body politic and corporate shall have been a student, shall in any way or manner act or interfere as the examiner of such person, and that all qualified students who shall have passed the said examination to the satisfaction of the examiners shall have the right to claim admission as members of the said body politic and corporate:

Membership fees

AND WE DO FURTHER WILL, GRANT, AND DECLARE, That no fee or fees for admission as a member of the said body politic and corporate shall at any time exceed the sum of ten guineas:

Procedure for and validity of orders, rules, and bye-laws

AND WE DO FURTHER WILL, GRANT, AND DECLARE, That all orders, rules, and bye-laws, to be as aforesaid from time to time made by the said council, shall be reduced into writing, and the council shall cause the common seal of the said body politic and corporate to be affixed thereto; and such orders, rules, and bye-laws, after the common seal of the said body politic and corporate shall have been affixed thereto, shall be binding upon the members of the said body politic and corporate, and upon all students and other persons who may be desirous to become members thereof: Provided, nevertheless, That any order, rule, or bye-law, or any alteration in, or repeal of, any existing order, rule, or bye-law, shall not be made, unless notice of the intention to make such order, rule, notice or bye-law, or such alteration in, or repeal of, any existing order, rule, or bye-law, shall have been given at a previous council, nor unless a fair copy or copies in writing of the same shall have been hung up in some conspicuous place in the common meeting room of the council, for and during the space of three calendar months previous to the meeting of the council at which it is intended to propose the same, nor unless the same shall be made at a council specially called for the purpose, and shall be confirmed by another council also specially called for the purpose, and held not more than fourteen days, nor less than seven days, after the day on which the council at which the same shall have been proposed shall have been held:

Corporate seal

Provided further, That in no case shall the corporate seal of the said body politic and corporate be affixed to any instrument whatsoever, except by the order of the council, and in the presence of at least three of the members of the council (of whom we will that the president, or one of the vice-presidents, shall be one), and the three

members in whose presence the same shall be affixed, shall, by their signatures, attest such sealing, and that the same was done by the order of the council:

Vesting and disposal of property

AND WE LASTLY WILL, GRANT, AND DECLARE, That the whole property of the said body politic and corporate shall be vested, and we do hereby vest the same, solely and absolutely in the said body politic and corporate, and that they shall have full power and authority to sell or otherwise to dispose of the same as they shall think proper, but that no sale or other disposition of any property belonging to the said body politic and corporate shall be made, except with the approbation and concurrence of the council.

Attestation of Charter

IN WITNESS whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patent. WITNESS ourself at our palace at Westminster, this eighth day of March, in the seventh year of our reign.

BY WRIT OF PRIVY SEAL,

EDMUNDS

[8 MARCH 1844]