



Inaugurated 25th January 1907

Rules

as proposed to the membership 25th September 2024

1. Title

The Association shall be known as “The North of Ireland Veterinary Association” (NIVA), herein after referred to as ‘the Association’.

The Association is the North of Ireland territorial division of the British Veterinary Association (BVA).

The Young Vet Network, Northern Ireland (YVNNI) is an integral part of the Association.

2. Objects

The purpose of the Association is for the promotion and advancement of veterinary and allied sciences, and for the furtherance of the status and prestige of the veterinary profession.

3. Membership

3.1 Full members: Full members can be either ordinary or recent graduate or senior or honorary. Fellows and Members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) or Members of the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI), and who work in, or from, the North of Ireland shall be eligible for full membership. Recent graduates are those who are qualified eight years or less. Senior members are those who are registered with the RCVS as non-practicing members or VCI equivalent and have reached the age of 65. Full members may have honorary membership conferred in accordance with Rule 14.

3.2 Associate members: Associate membership shall be open to any other person, not being a veterinary surgeon, as the Council may from time to time approve. Associate members may have honorary associate membership conferred in accordance with Rule 14.

3.3 Becoming a member: Application or nomination for membership is made through the Secretariat to the Council of the Association. The candidate’s election shall be determined by a four-fifths majority of votes in favour by members of the Council. Successful elections shall be announced at the next general meeting. Membership is only confirmed after election and on receipt of the appropriate fee.

4. Termination of membership

4.1 Resignation: Resignation of membership shall be signified by written communication or by email, to the Secretary.

4.2 Removal from the Association register of members: The Council shall be empowered to remove from the list of members the name of any person guilty of conduct which in the general opinion of the Council could bring discredit on the Association. Such decision to be taken by a vote carried by a majority of the Council. Members who have not paid the current year’s subscription by 31st May will also be subject to automatic removal (see rule 16.3)

5. Council

The Council shall conduct the business of the Association on behalf of the members and shall make recommendations where appropriate to the membership for their consideration and ratification.

The Council shall have the following officers, elected from the full members:

- (i) the President, to serve ordinarily one year
- (ii) the Senior Vice-President (the immediate past President), to serve ordinarily one year
- (iii) Junior Vice-President (the President-elect), to serve ordinarily one year
- (iv) Treasurer, to serve ordinarily three years
- (v) Secretary, to serve ordinarily three years
- (vi) Press Officer, to serve ordinarily three years
- (vii) Deputy Treasurer, to serve ordinarily three years
- (viii) Up to nine other members, the Councillors, each to serve ordinarily three years one of whom will be the Deputy Press Officer.

The Council shall have the following nominated representatives who shall also be members of the Association, nominated annually, to serve a maximum 3 years consecutively:

- (ix) The Vet NI Board Representative
- (x) Young Vet Network, Northern Ireland (YVNNI) Representative
- (xi) The Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practicing in Northern Ireland (AVSPNI) Representative.

The Officers in (i) – (vi) shall be the Executive Officers and must be members of the British Veterinary Association. In addition, the following persons are invited to Council as ex officio members: -

- (a) The BVA Regional Representative for Northern Ireland on BVA Council
- (b) The BVA Northern Ireland Branch Representative on BVA Council
- (c) Any member of the Association serving on any BVA committee
- (d) Any member of the Association serving on RCVS Council (e) The Chief Veterinary Officer in Northern Ireland
- (f) Vet NI Secretariat, subject to rule 6.3.

Council may co-opt from time-to-time additional ex officio members or individuals if the expertise of the said member or individual is considered necessary to execute Council business effectively.

Nothing shall prevent a member from covering more than one area of responsibility on Council. Ordinarily no member shall retain the same responsibility for more than three years consecutively. However, after a break of one year the member shall be eligible for re-election.

6. Secretariat

6.1 Vet NI, the Secretariat, shall provide secretariat services to the Association according to the terms of a memorandum of understanding.

6.2 The Secretariat shall hold and maintain the register of member's names, category and contact details in a suitable format to facilitate the business of the Association and to comply with data protection rules. The information will be shared with Association's Executive, Council and membership, as necessary, for the legitimate business of the Association.

6.3 In the event of ceasing to provide Secretariat services to the Association, Vet NI shall return all records to the Association held on its behalf. In addition, Vet NI shall no longer have a right to a position on Association Council.

7. President – Duties and Authority

The President shall preside and regulate the proceedings of all meetings of the Association and Council in accordance with these rules.

The President shall invite those present to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record.

The President can at any time call upon a member to conclude their remarks should they, in the President's opinion, be trespassing on the time of the meeting or should their language or the substance of their remarks be considered by the President in any way irrelevant or objectionable.

When a vote is taken the President shall in cases of equality have a casting vote in addition to their own vote as a member.

In the absence of the President, one of the Vice-Presidents or, in their absence, one of the members present shall be elected to the Chair and carry out the duties of the President for the duration of that meeting.

8. Secretary

The Secretary shall, with the support of the Secretariat, conduct correspondence on behalf of the Association, take the minutes and be responsible for the safe custody of the Association's books and records.

9. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall, with the support of the Secretariat, receive and pay all monies on behalf of the Association, shall keep the accounts in a manner required for compliance with company law, and shall submit the accounts together with such vouchers as may be required, to the auditor not later than the 31st of January in each year, and shall subsequently present the audited accounts to the members at the annual general meeting.

10. Press Officer

The Press Officer shall assist in handling media enquiries and preparing, writing and distributing press releases and social media posts, which accurately reflect the views of the members and present both the profession and the Association positively. The Press Officer can be assisted by one of the Councillors, acting as deputy to the Press Officer when required.

11. Vet NI Board Representative

The VetNI Board Representative is the conduit between the Association Council and the VetNI Board for tasks and issues relevant to the Secretariat.

12. Councillors

Councillors shall help to devise an appropriate programme of educational and social events and assist with the organisation and running of such events as required. To allow the Association to effectively represent the whole profession, Councillors shall, through engagement with membership, gather and contribute views and concerns from across the profession. Councillors shall contribute to the debate on issues at meetings and in correspondence to help formulate, support and communicate the Association's position on issues. One of the Councillors shall be the Deputy Press Officer and shall assist the Press Officer and deputise for them as required.

13. Obligations, rights and privileges of members and associates.

13.1 Members and associates are obliged to:

- (a) keep contact details held by the Secretariat up to date;
- (b) advise the Secretariat of an e-mail address. Where a member or associate does not have access to e-mail they must accept that they shall only receive those communications considered key by Council.
- (c) act respectfully to the chair and others present at meetings and observe the rules for elections and bringing forward motions for discussion; and
- (d) pay the appropriate annual subscription fee no later than 31st May immediately following the annual general meeting.

13.2 Every full member, who is not in arrears for the current year, shall be entitled to vote at general meetings.

13.3 Senior members shall benefit from a reduction in annual subscription to the Association. It is the responsibility of the member to notify the Treasurer or the Secretariat of their entitlement to senior status. (See Rule 16 Subscriptions)

13.4 Honorary members shall be exempt from payment of the annual subscription. They shall be distinguished by the title "Honorary Member of the North of Ireland Veterinary Association".

13.5 Associate members shall not be entitled to vote and shall not be eligible for election to the Association's Council, other than as set out in Rule 5.

13.6 Honorary associate members shall be exempt from payment of the annual subscription. They shall be distinguished by the title "Honorary Associate Member of the North of Ireland Veterinary Association".

14. Honorary membership

Honorary Members and Honorary Associate Members: Full and associate members, who have rendered distinguished service to the Association or to the veterinary profession, may be elected as Honorary Members or Honorary Associate Members, as appropriate, by agreement at a general meeting of the Association on the recommendation of the Council. Nomination for election must be submitted in writing to Council for consideration and approval before being offered for election at a general meeting.

15. Honorary affiliate-ship

On the recommendation of the Council, there may be annually elected any number of Honorary Affiliates at the annual general meeting. Honorary affiliate-ship may be offered to persons who will confer honour on or advance the interests of the Association. Any such appointment shall run until the conclusion of the next annual general meeting. Any person having served as an Honorary Affiliates shall, on the recommendation of the Council, be eligible for re-election in sequential years. Failing such re-election, the person shall cease to be an Honorary Affiliate at the conclusion of that annual general meeting.

Honorary Affiliates shall not pay a membership fee, shall not have any voting rights and shall take no part in the administration of the Association. Honorary Affiliates may take an active part in all scientific and social sections of the Association's activities. The individual shall be distinguished by the title "Honorary Affiliate of the North of Ireland Veterinary Association". Honorary Affiliates shall not in normal circumstances be eligible for nomination to Council but may be co-opted on an annual, ex officio basis in accordance with Rule 5.

16. Subscription

16.1 Payment of fees: Membership fees shall be related to the year beginning with the annual general meeting. The annual subscription shall be payable in full by the 31st May each year.

16.2 Register of members: Where a single payment is to cover the membership fees for a number of members, the subscriber is responsible for notifying the Secretariat or Treasurer at the time of payment of the names of the individuals covered by such payment in order to maintain their position on the members register.

16.3 Termination of membership: Where a membership fee is not fully paid by 31st May following the annual general meeting and no letter of resignation has been received, one further reminder will be sent, before the membership shall be automatically terminated. Those who wish to re-join will be charged a full year's fee.

16.4 Concessionary rates: Senior members and recent graduates shall benefit from a concessionary membership rate, the level of which shall be agreed annually, on the recommendation of the Treasurer and Council, at the annual general meeting. In addition, proposed members who would ordinarily be liable for the full membership rate will be offered a 50% reduction should they join after 1st July in the relevant year.

17. Meetings

17.1 General meetings: A minimum of four general meetings shall be held in each year, one of these to be the annual general meeting, to be held ordinarily in February, at which the Executive Officers shall present their reports of the year's activities. All general meetings shall be convened by circular sent by e-mail, giving not less than seven days' notice to members. The minutes of each meeting shall be circulated by e-mail within one month of the meeting. Members without access to e-mail will receive notice of the annual general meeting by post giving not less than seven days' notice of the meeting but will only receive other communications by post at the discretion of Council.

17.2 Extraordinary general meeting: An extraordinary general meeting may be convened at any time by the Council, or upon a written request specifying the objects of the meeting, addressed to the Secretary by not less than ten members. Only the specified business may be transacted at an extraordinary general meeting.

17.3 Council meetings: Meetings of the Council shall be held at the discretion of the President and Secretary at such a time and place as they may determine. Council members should attend at least two meetings throughout the year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

17.4 **Quorums** At a meeting of the Council five shall constitute a quorum, while fifteen shall be a quorum for general and other meetings of the Association.

17.5 **Conduct of meetings** Business shall be conducted according to the agenda set to cover the need determined by the President and / or Secretary in discussion with Council. Matters for discussion under "Any Other Business" must be notified to the Secretary no later than the start of the meeting.

17.6 **Visitors and guests:** Visitors and guests shall only be members of the veterinary profession, or others by introduction of the President, and shall be welcomed only after any business of the Association has been concluded.

18. Elections

Election of Executive Officers, Councillors and Honorary Affiliates shall take place at the annual general meeting. Vacant posts shall be advertised on the Association's webpage of the VetNI website no later than four weeks before the annual general meeting and in the notice convening the annual general meeting.

All nominations shall be in writing and must be with the Secretary not less than two days prior to the annual general meeting.

All of the above elections to take place by ballot.

Members of Council will ordinarily serve for a maximum 3 years in any one post following their election and are then ineligible for re-election to the same post until one year has passed.

Ratification of Council recommendations for honorary memberships shall also take place at the annual general meeting.

18.1 – If an officer resigns or is unable to complete a current role throughout the membership year, the President and Council have the right to appoint another person to fulfil this role until the next AGM whereupon it shall be formally ratified.

19. Support for Young Vet Network Northern Ireland (YVNNI)

The Association, through the Secretariat, shall assist YVNNI by facilitating promotion of, and registration for events, organised by the YVNNI and provide other ad hoc assistance as agreed by Council.

The finances relating to YVNNI events shall be included in the Association's accounts.

20. Income, property and dissolution

The income and property of the Association are to be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Association and shall not be handed over by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to members. Remuneration of expenses incurred in the rendering of services to the Association may be paid to any person, including officers, by prior agreement of the Treasurer after consultation with Council.

Every member undertakes to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 to the assets of the Association, in the event of it being wound up during their membership, for payment of debts and liabilities contracted before the time when they ceased to be a member. Any surplus funds remaining after the discharge of the Association's liabilities shall be dispersed to the contributing members.

21. Matters not provided for

Any matter not provided for in these rules shall be left to the discretion of Council.

22. Alteration and Implementation of the Rules

22.1 The alteration or rescinding of any of these rules or the introduction of a new rule shall take place only at the annual general meeting or at an extra ordinary general meeting convened for that purpose. All proposed changes must be forwarded to the Council for consideration prior to making recommendation to members for decision at the meeting.

22.2 In the event of a rule being rescinded or altered or a new rule added, the change shall be communicated by the Secretariat to Members by e-mail and the revised completed rules made available on the Association's web page.

This 2024 version of the Association Rules shall come into operation on the 25th September 2024, after having been approved at an emergency general meeting on that date, the substance of which having been debated at Council and general meetings during the preceding year.