

dogs control over key aspects of their lives in put in place "for some time", said the trust.

BVA CONCERN AS RCVS LOOKS TO RAISE VOICE

THE RCVS could be on a collision course with the BVA over college plans to develop its role as a mouthpiece for the veterinary profession.

As part of the ongoing first-rate regulator initiative, the RCVS wants to evolve and enhance the function of its college fellows and is consulting on a number of proposals, including the creation of a learned society.

Once formed, the society would have a chairman and officers and, according to the consultation notes, would be a "source of expert knowledge" and "undertake reviews and comment upon important veterinary issues".

Learned society

Alongside its binding codes of professional conduct, in the past the RCVS has worked to produce a canon of supporting guidance for clinicians, covering topics such as client confidentiality, clinical governance, emergency first-aid and pre-purchase examinations.

RCVS committees have also debated and drafted college statements on topical issues including feline renal transplantation, vet nurses giving epidurals and welfare officers administering pentobarbital.

However, it appears the college could be seeking a more active opinion-leading role within the profession. "Fellows are being asked to give us their views on proposals

report by

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that would see the fellowship shifting from an examination-based award to a formal learned society, to fulfil some of the duties that are part of the charter function of the RCVS," said Gary England, chairman of the fellowship working party.

Prof England added: "The proposals are that the number of fellows would be limited to 1,000, and new fellows could apply through one of three routes: meritorious contribution to knowledge; meritorious contribution to clinical practice; and meritorious contribution to the profession. Existing fellows would be unaffected by the changes.

"Meanwhile, the extent to which we develop a stronger 'Royal College' role will be considered as part of our strategy plan for 2014-17, which is due to be discussed at an open meeting of council in September.

"It was clear from our first-rate regulator research this was something the membership wanted us to consider. For example, more than 40 per cent of respondents to the profession's survey felt we could improve on our provision of informed and impartial advice."

The BVA has released a statement sug-

gesting the development could lead to a conflict of interests.

Conflict of interest

BVA president Peter Jones said: "The RCVS proposals suggest a radical new direction for the college and we are very keen to hear our members' views on the subject. The college's desire to move towards becoming a source of informed scientific opinion has been discussed a number of times at BVA council, with a very clear view expressed by our members that we should not support it.

"BVA council felt there would be a conflict of interest if the college tried to speak on behalf of vets while continuing to regulate the profession and this would not be in the public interest. The stated intent for the new fellowship body, the learned society, to comment on important veterinary issues only adds to this concern."

Consultation

In light of these concerns, which would see the RCVS president sitting on the fellowship appointment group, the BVA has launched a consultation to gauge the feeling of its members.

Mr Jones added: "The new proposals have attempted to address some of council's concerns, but we would need to be reassured the proposed learned society would operate separately from the college and have a defined and tight remit.

"There is a short consultation period and we are seeking members' views on both the broad principle and the detail of the proposals, ideally via the BVA community or direct to policy@bva.co.uk to feed into our council meeting on July 31."

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'Vindictive' baby gull attack prompts tolerance plea



Photo: RSPCA

THE RSPCA has urged more tolerance of gulls this summer after a teenage boy threw a baby gull from the top of a two-storey department store in Suffolk, killing it.

According to the animal welfare charity, the boy picked the herring gull chick out of its nest on the roof of Beales in Lowestoft and threw it to the ground. Witnesses said teenage girls and boys were cheering the boy on, and the bird was alive at the moment of impact, but died 30 seconds later.

Such attacks on gulls are not uncommon, claims the RSPCA. Other attacks

have included the use of airguns, with one gull receiving 10 pellets in its spine, wings and organs (pictured).

"It was very clear from eyewitness accounts this young boy was deliberately, and quite vindictively, attacking this baby bird," said RSPCA inspector Ben Kirby. "Sadly, this kind of incident is not as unusual as you would hope and every year we deal with many cases of such callous attacks."

Adam Grogan, a senior scientist at the charity, said it only takes "a little care and understanding" to minimise any incon-

venience caused by gulls and the birds are often just behaving "in a natural way".

"For instance, you can't blame them for not knowing the difference between scraps willingly offered and your own bag of chips. They are simply wild animals following their instincts to find food," he said.

"The RSPCA believes deterrents and non-lethal methods of control are far better at helping to reduce problems. Not feeding the gulls and disposing of rubbish properly is one thing we can all do to prevent them from causing a nuisance," he said.

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