President’s Introduction
As I write this at the end of my Presidential year, SPVS is in good shape. At the heart of what we do is networking and colleague support and we have built on this in 2015, adding in new networking opportunities, Cyclescene and Spascene, and new initiatives to offer more support.

We know our members value our salary and fee surveys and with the help of our IT Partners, Veterinary Insights, this is being developed further, making it easier for practices to complete the survey online and adding a new ‘profitablity’ survey. Our Vet Viewer benchmarking initiative launched earlier this year is already sampling 200 practices and is being used across the profession. At least two sessions at this year’s Congress will draw on this data.

Our relationship with VPMA continues to work well for both associations with our CPD and Congress going from strength to strength. Particular thanks to Citation, Merial, Zoetis and Royal Canin for their support.

Finally my thanks to SPVS Officers and Council members, and to our Secretariat, who have all worked tirelessly on their different projects from our surveys to the new benchmarking service; from helping members with enquiries to overseeing our email discussion group; from co-editing the magazine to the society administration.

Nick Stuart, SPVS President

New Offices
After 12 happy years at their Governor’s House office, the SPVS secretariat, Claire, Sally and Sarah had to find new premises when the property was sold for redevelopment. But they are now very happily rehomed in a light and airy first floor office above the old fashioned sweet shop at Hatton Country World just outside Warwick trying to resist the temptation of 30 different flavours of fudge from the shop below. Do call in to see them if you are in the area. Address and telephone at the foot of the report

Making our Voice Heard
Many of our members are practice owners at the sharp end, which is why SPVS opinion is requested and valued. In 2015, SPVS Council Members have contributed to discussions on, for instance, Vet Futures, Mind Matters, the BVA discussions on Governance, and how best to tackle the shortage of experienced vets.

SPVS comments are increasingly sought by the veterinary press where the view of the practice owner is relevant and we have been quoted in leading articles in the Vet Times and other publications on several occasions throughout the year. In a further development, VBJ will become our media partner for our CPD programme and Focus Days in 2016.

Our enhanced surveys and benchmarking will help to make SPVS voice even more relevant going forward.

SPVS and RCVS Practice Standards Scheme
SPVS have been involved in the reshaping of the new Practice Standards Scheme. Jacqui Molyneux, a past President of SPVS, has been at the forefront of these changes on behalf of RCVS and SPVS, led by Anna Judson have been active members of the Practice Standards Group. The new standards are more focussed on behaviours and include the new awards recognising customer service, the practice team, clinical care and out of hours. This is a welcome development and SPVS will continue to follow progress.

www.spvs.org.uk
Benchmarking and Surveys

A key benefit we offer SPVS members are our fees and salary surveys and we have built on these by adding additional surveys and benchmarking initiatives. The first of these, the Vet Viewer Benchmarking Survey, was launched at Congress 2015 in partnership with Veterinary Insights. This sort of data, as well as being of real value to individual practices, will make our voice very relevant within the profession.

Fellow associations and other relationships

SPVS representatives attended our fellow association congresses and enjoyed a variety of dinners and banquets as guests of their respective presidents. These included BSAVA, BVNA, BEVA, BCVA, AVSNPI (held on the border between Northern and Southern Ireland) and BVA Congress at LVS.

We continue our strong relationship with VDS and attended their recent graduate reunions across the year. An excellent opportunity for SPVS to reinforce their support for the newer members of the profession and to keep in touch with the concerns and aspirations of younger vets.

Networking

Networking is at the heart of SPVS philosophy; offering a place where likeminded vets can come together to exchange ideas and experiences and in so doing improve their businesses and their lives. Our ‘scenes’ are an important part of this as is our email forum, our annual Christmas dinner and, of course, Congress and our Regional CPD and Focus Days.

Snowscene

A party of 60 including 45 delegates made their way to Italian Dolomites for a week of superb skiing and excellent lectures from Alan Robinson, Vet Dynamics and Mark Pattinson, Heart Vets.

Cyclescene

Cyclescene, new for 2015, was led by Brian Faulkner and attended by 17 keen (and not so keen) cyclists. The venue was Provence in the South of France which provided some challenging routes, including Mount Ventoux, as well as more relaxing cycling for the less ambitious. CPD was from Brian Faulkner and James Cronin of Legal Eight.

Spascene

This was Anna Judson’s initiative for the less physically energetic members. It was held at the luxurious Hoar Cross Hotel in Staffordshire with excellent and thought provoking CPD from Katherine Eitel, Lioness Learning.
**Discussion Group**

It has been a busy year on the SPVS discussion forum with over 300 different topics discussed in the last 6 months alone. Some of these are clinical from abscesses in rams to rodent anaesthesia. Others are managerial from discussions on phone recording to pay rises and bonuses. And sometimes it is just a general chat over rugby tickets or moral support on a bad day. There is always a friendly ear and often a bad joke!

**Support for younger vets**

The Lancaster Final Year Seminar, supported by SPVS Educational Trust, RCVS and BVA will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2017. This iconic event has gone from strength to strength, led by Catriona Curtis and this year there were over 175 students with every vet school in the UK represented.

The feedback is always exceptional and most students say it is the most valuable thing they do prior to graduating. Thanks in particular to Virbac, Hills, VDS, Citation and Elanco for their support.

SPVS also support younger vets and students through the VDS recent graduate reunion, our CV reading service and the 5 to 15 years qualified lunch at Congress.

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**SPVS/VPMA Congress**

Over 470 delegates, of which 40% were Practice Owners attended the third combined VPMA/SPVS Congress in January 2015 at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, South Wales. Many practices brought several members of their teams and in total over 200 different practices were represented. At the time of writing, registrations were up again for Congress 2016 and we predict over 500 delegates. The exhibition sold out early in the year with 62 stands and a waiting list. Platinum sponsors are Citation and Merial.

**SPVS/VPMA Regional CPD and Focus Days**

We ran 14 regional CPD events plus 2 Focus Days in 2015 and a special workshop on the new Practice Standards Scheme in partnership with RCVS. In 2016, there will be 16 events, including a 2 day H&S workshop and we will run our first event in Northern Ireland in partnership with AVSPNI. Three of our events will be run in association with BVNA, a partnership which seems to work well for both associations.

Our Focus on Technology will include digital marketing and Focus on the Practice Team will have a stream dedicated to reception. Sponsors are again Zoetis and Royal Canin and VBJ will be our media partner.

CPD, Focus Days and Congress were led by Brian Faulkner in 2015.

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**Magazine**

Practice Life, the membership magazine produced jointly with VPMA, goes out to members in March, June, September and December. The editorial team, represented by Steph Writer-Davies for SPVS, have endeavoured to ensure that the content continues to be topical and relevant. Responses to an on-line survey suggest we have mostly achieved that; comments and suggestions made have been noted for further development of the magazine and its website.
Membership

Membership has remained stable over the past 3 years with members leaving comfortably replaced by 228 new members in 2015. Practice membership in particular is up by almost 50% since 2008, with practices taking advantage of CPD and Congress member rates for their staff.

From February 1st, an enhanced offer to Practice members will encourage this area of growth further. We also intend to make SPVS more welcoming to non-MRCVS members going forward to reflect the increasingly mixed ownership of practice.

Financial Report SPVS Year-Ending September 2015

This year, to coincide with SPVS incorporation as a company limited by guarantee, our financial year-end has changed from December to September, to help prepare the accounts in time for our annual Congress. This means there are some variations caused by amounts being carried over from one year to the next. Nonetheless it is gratifying to report that our finances are in good shape, because whilst membership income has remained static, the surplus generated by our CPD events has increased to £82,000. A further £27,700 was brought forward from last year’s Congress. Stripping out this, and the income from magazine advertising and sponsorship (which is offset against magazine costs), means total income has increased by 80% over the same period last year.

Expenses too have been well controlled, with Council costs down by 37% on the previous year, though this is likely to reduce to about 20% once outstanding amounts have been claimed. Office and Staff Costs fell by 1%. Other major expenditure has been Practice Life Magazine at a net cost to SPVS of £10,170 (down 8% on last year), professional expenses associated with incorporation (which at £8,000 are the same as last year), and promotional and advertising costs of £10,500 (a reduction of 7% on last year). Overall, net expenditure is down by 13%, leaving a surplus of £94,000 for the period, compared with £6,400 last year.

SPVS net assets, including investments of £40,000 and tangible fixed assets of £4,000, now stand at £410,000 compared to £309,000 at the end of December 2014 when the last set of accounts was prepared.

Clearly finances are in good health. However, there has been a deliberate policy to build our reserve to cover our increased risk as our activities, particularly Congress, grow. Now we have built this reserve, Council will consider future investment and spending for the benefit of our members.

Peter Brown, SPVS Treasurer