



Constitution of the  
Institute of Registered  
Veterinary & Animal Physiotherapists



## Constitution

### A Name of Association

Institute of Registered Veterinary and Animal Physiotherapists (IRVAP)

### B Administration

IRVAP will be managed under this constitution by the officers of the council, as provided by clause F ('the council').

### C Aims

1. To facilitate safe and effective practice in all aspects of animal therapy and healthcare, aligning sound scientific knowledge to current clinical practice
2. To promote awareness of the benefits of physiotherapy treatment and management for injured and ageing animals to improve the lives of animals and owners
3. To encourage research collaborations and scientific based approaches across the field of professionals working in the animal therapy sector
4. To offer an accreditation service for courses and CPD facilitating quality choices of career progression in veterinary physiotherapy and animal rehabilitation
5. To foster a positive and dynamic approach to support members by building a trusted community and resource centre to advance professional standards
6. To optimise effective communication and support of professional, clinical, business and educational matters between members for efficient administration and practise
7. To nurture an inclusive system of support for professional development, with annual reaffirmation of professional obligation towards our CPD requirement



## D Powers

The following powers may be used by the council provided that:

1. They are used to promote the aims
2. The council complies with all relevant laws
3. Consent is obtained where necessary
  - a) Power to invite and receive contributions
  - b) Power to raise funds, as long as the council does not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities
  - c) Power to set any membership subscription
  - d) Power to buy, take on, lease or exchange any property, and power to maintain and equip the property for use
  - e) Power to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the institute's property
  - f) Power to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the institute's property with repayment of the borrowed money
  - g) Power to employ staff (who must not be officers of the council) as necessary for promoting the aims, and power to make all reasonable and necessary arrangements for the payment of pensions for staff
  - h) Power to cooperate with other voluntary bodies and statutory authorities who have identical or similar aims and to exchange information and advice with them
  - i) Power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions to achieve all or any of the aims
  - j) Power to establish any advisory committees necessary
  - k) Power to do all other things necessary for the achievement of the aims

## E Membership: (individuals only)

- a. Every Veterinary Physiotherapist member has one vote.
- b. The council can terminate a person's membership only if:
  - The council agrees by a majority that the membership should be ended; and
  - The person is given the right to be heard by the council accompanied by an advocate of their choice before a final decision is made



The council shall appoint members in the following categories, sub groups or additional categories:

## Categories;

### Fellow

This category shall be awarded to those members who have shown excellence in both the promotion and application of animal therapy. The council may recommend any member; Veterinary Physiotherapist, Manual Therapist, ICH or IEH to become a Fellow.

Post nominals *FIRVAP* will denote this category

### Veterinary Physiotherapist

Any person practicing is eligible to become a veterinary physiotherapist member of the institute if they:

- Have successfully completed a course in veterinary/animal musculoskeletal therapy, externally endorsed /accredited by a UK awarding body, and benchmarked at a minimum of level 6 as described by the new conditions set by the RFQ (Regulated Qualifications Framework)
  - Are a qualified practitioner deemed appropriate by the council
  - Is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the IRVAP Code of Practice
  - Has paid the institute's annual subscription
  - Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the registration procedure
- a. Post nominals *MIRVAP(VP)* will denote this category

### Manual Therapist<sup>1</sup>

Any person practicing is eligible to become a manual therapist member of the institute if they:

- Are a qualified practitioner deemed appropriate by the council
- Hold an industry specific qualification at Level 3 -6
- Is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the IRVAP Code of Practice
- Has paid the institute's annual subscription
- Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the registration procedure
- Post nominals *MIRVAP(MT)* will denote this category

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<sup>1</sup> Name change EGM, ratified 2020



## Subgroup ICH;

### Institute of Canine Hydrotherapists (ICH) <sup>2</sup>

ICH has its own specialist appointed board accountable to the council on all matters and holds one vote at Council Level. The Chair of the ICH will be a current or past Council Officer.

Any person practicing is eligible to become an ICH member of the institute if they:

- Are a qualified practitioner deemed appropriate by the ICH Board
- Holds a minimum of an Ofqual level 3+ Certificate in canine hydrotherapy or can map in their university qualifications to the day one competencies
- Is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the IRVAP Code of Practice
- Has paid the institute's annual subscription
- Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the registration procedure
- Post nominals *MIRVAP(ICH)* will denote this sub group membership

## Subgroup IEH;

### Institute of Equine Hydrotherapists (IEH)<sup>3</sup>

IEH has its own specialist appointed board accountable to the council on all matters and holds one vote at Council Level. The Chair of the IEH will be a current or past Council Officer.

Any person practicing is eligible to become an IEH member of the institute if they:

- Are deemed to be appropriate by the IEH Board
- Evidence their equine practice and experience through a CV and CPD portfolio
- Is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the IRVAP Code of Practice
- Has paid the institute's annual subscription
- Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the registration procedure
- Post nominals *MIRVAP(IEH)* will denote this sub group membership

## Additional Categories

For individuals who are studying or working in the animal therapy and healthcare sector.

### Student

Any person studying an animal physiotherapy or related course is eligible to become a member of the institute if they:

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<sup>2</sup> Ratified 2020

<sup>3</sup> Ratified 2020



- Are a current student on any course and are deemed appropriate by the council
- Is committed to promoting the aims and agrees to abide by the Code of Practice
- Has paid the institute's annual subscription
- Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the registration procedure
- No post nominals or professional listing is applicable for this category

### **Honorary fellowship**

This may be awarded by the council to any person who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of veterinary physiotherapy but is not a qualified or practising veterinary physiotherapist.

- Honorary membership may be awarded at the discretion of the Council to any person
- Post nominals denoting honorary status would be *HonFIRVAP*

### **Non-Practising Member**

Any current member can be registered in this category if they;

- Return to full time study or
- Require maternity or paternity leave or
- Have a registered long term illness or
- Elect to take a sabbatical and
- Is deemed appropriate by the council
- Has paid the institute's annual subscription
- Whose application has been accepted by the council and has been successfully processed through the accreditation procedures
- Surrenders their post nominals whilst non practicing and
- To be reinstated following successful completion of CPD requirements set by council, to their previous category or sub group

### **Membership renewal**

- Renewals are due on 31<sup>st</sup> March annually. Reminders will be sent out annually.
- Veterinary Physiotherapist, Fellow, Manual Therapist, ICH and IEH member renewal is dependent upon having available records of appropriate CPD, 75 hours over 3 years, following the IRVAP framework and holding appropriate insurance
- The Education Officer will be responsible for ongoing appropriate audits and reporting back to council of any concerns



## F Honorary officers

At the IRVAP annual general meeting (AGM), the members will elect from among themselves a chair, a secretary and a treasurer. The Council Officers take up their offices from the end of that meeting.

## G Council

The council will be made up of not less than five nor more than ten Officers being:

- The honorary officers specified in clause F; and
- Not less than five and not more than ten Officers elected at the annual general meeting who hold office from the end of that meeting.
- The council may, in addition, appoint not more than five Council 'Co-opted members'.
- However, the council cannot appoint any person as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one-half of the members of the council would be co-opted members
- Co-opted members can be appointed at a special meeting of the council called under clause J.
- A co-opted member's appointment takes effect from the end of that meeting, unless the appointment is to fill a future vacancy; in that case, the appointment begins on the date the post is vacated.
- The council may, in addition, appoint not more than five 'affiliated members' who are not qualified members but have specific skills to help with systems of practice and is an annual posting.

All the Council Officers will retire from office together at the end of the next annual general meeting after they came into office. They may be re-elected or re-appointed. The proceedings of the council are not invalidated by:

- Any vacancy in the council;
  - Any failure to appoint a member; or
  - Any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.
1. The council may take out indemnity insurance to protect the committee members for liabilities they may incur for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust, excluding:
    - all fines;
    - costs of unsuccessfully defending criminal prosecutions for offences arising out of fraud, dishonesty, or wilful or reckless misconduct; and



- liabilities to the institute resulting from conduct that the council officer knew, or must be assumed to have known, was not in the best interests of the institute, or that the council officer did not care whether it was in the best interests of the institute
2. Council Officers, Co-opted members and Affiliate members will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement on joining Council<sup>4</sup> or Boards.
  3. Council Officers will receive a benefit for their term in office of 25% discount on all IRVAP organised CPD and will not be required to pay membership fees during their office term<sup>5</sup>.

## **H Termination of membership of the council**

A member will no longer be an officer of the council if they:

- Become incapable, by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury, of managing their own affairs;
- Is absent without permission from all council meetings held over six months, and the council resolves that their office be vacated; or
- Notifies the council that they wish to resign (but only if at least three officers of the council will remain in office when the resignation takes effect).

## **I Council officers and personal interest**

Except in keeping with sub-clause 2 and sub-clause 3 of this clause, no officer of the council must have any interest in property belonging to the institute (except as the institute's trustee) or receive payment from or have an interest in (except as an officer of the council) any contract entered into by the council. This sub-clause shall not affect the council's right to obtain indemnity insurance as described in the sub-clause, Clause G.

1. A member of the council can be repaid for any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the institute
2. Any officers of the council may charge and be paid for professional, trade or other services provided by them or their firms when instructed by the other officers of the council. At no time must a majority of the council officers benefit under this provision. Officers of the council must withdraw from any meeting discussing their own instruction or remuneration, or that of their firms.

## **J Meetings and proceedings of the council**

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<sup>4</sup> Voted in at 2018 AGM

<sup>5</sup> Voted in at 2018 AGM





- The council will hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. A special meeting may be called at any time by the chair or by any two members of the council. The other council members must be notified of the matters to be discussed at least four days before the meeting. If a co-opted member is to be appointed at the meeting, members must be informed at least 21 days before the meeting
- The chair will act as chair at meetings of the council. If the chair is absent, the attending members of the council will choose one member to be chair of the meeting before any other business is done
- At least one-third of the members of the existing council, but never less than three council members, must be present for a meeting to be valid
- Every matter will be decided by a majority of votes of the attending council members. In the case of equality of votes, the chair of the meeting will have a second or casting vote
- The council will keep minutes of meetings of the council and any sub-committee
- The council may, from time to time, make and change rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings, and the custody of documents. No rule may be inconsistent with this constitution
- The council may appoint sub-committees of at least three council officers to make any inquiry, or to supervise or perform any function or duty which would be more conveniently carried out by a sub-committee. All acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees will be fully and promptly reported to the council.

## **K Receipts and expenditure**

- The funds of the institute, including all donations, contributions and bequests, will be paid into an account operated by the council in the name of the institute, at a bank chosen by the council. There will be two signatories on the bank account
- The funds belonging to the institute will be used only to further the aims
- A current record of all income, funding and expenditure will be kept

## **L Property**

The council must ensure that:

- All land held by or in trust for the institute and
- All investments held by or in trust for the institute,

must be held in the name or names of:

- A corporation entitled to act as custodian trustee; or
- Not less than three individuals



Holding trustees may be removed by the council at its discretion and must act under the lawful directions of the council. As long as the holding trustees act only under the council's lawful directions, they will not be liable for the acts and defaults of the council officers.

## **M Annual general meeting**

- An annual general meeting of the institute will be held each year
- Every annual general meeting will be arranged by the council
- The secretary must notify the members of the institute at least 21 days before the meeting
- All members can attend and Full Members have 1 vote at the meeting
- Meetings will be chaired by the institute's chairman or his/her appointed deputy
- The council will present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the institute for the preceding year
- Nominations for election to the council must be made by institute members in writing. The secretary of the council must receive all nominations at least 14 days before the annual general meeting. Election will be by ballot only if the number of vacancies exceeds the number of nominations
- Members are required to attend 1 in 3 AGM meetings in order to uphold their membership<sup>6</sup>
- A quorum of 10% of the membership is required for the AGM to be considered valid<sup>7</sup>

## **N Emergency general meetings**

Emergency general meetings of the institute can be called;

- By the council at any time; or
- By the secretary if 10 or more institute members write a request including the business to be considered
- All members of the institute must be notified of the business to be discussed at least 21 days before an emergency general meeting

## **O Procedure at general meetings**

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<sup>6</sup> Voted in at 2018 AGM

<sup>7</sup> Voted in at 2018 AGM



- The secretary, or another person specially appointed by the council, will keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the institute
- All proposals put forward to vote shall be decided by secret ballot

## **P Notices and use of electronic communication**

Any required notice must be served on institute officers in writing;

- Any member, by providing the institute with his or her email address or similar, is taken to have agreed to receive written communications from the institute in electronic form at that address, unless the member has indicated to the institute his or her unwillingness to receive such communications in that form

## **Q Alterations to the constitution**

The constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include the terms of the proposed alteration.

## **R Dissolution**

- If the council decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the institute, it will call a meeting of all members. Notice (stating the terms of the proposed dissolution) must be given at least 21 days before the meeting
- If the proposal is approved by two-thirds of those present and voting, the council will have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the institute
- Any assets remaining after all proper debts and liabilities are paid will be transferred to a charity or charities with identical or similar objects, as decided by the institute members. Failing that, the assets will be applied for some other charitable purpose

Subscribers,

(Names of 2020 – 2021 Council Officers)

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Barbara Houlding

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Deborah Winchester

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Ellie Cooke

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Grainne Ni Chaba-Byrne

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Michelle O'Brien

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Avril Coleman

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Sarah Ward

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