

# Tom Lonsdale Veterinary Surgeon

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12 October 2017

Chloe Newbold  
Clerk to the Disciplinary Committee

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By email only: c.newbold@rcvs.org.uk

Dear Chloe,

**Re: Lonsdale v RCVS – Challenge to the validity of the 2017 Council Election (“the Election”)**

Further to the Legal Assessor, Mr Richard Price OBE, QC letter of 4 October I make the following intercalated points.

My comments are in black, Mr Price’s advice in blue and the Committee Members’ statements are rendered here in green.

First an analogy and some pivotal background facts.

We evince horror at the thought a few glass beads were the price of a slave — that trinkets of ephemeral value induced men to do unspeakable things to their fellow man. I evince a similar horror that my profession is captive and enslaved to three multinational corporations — Mars Inc., Nestlé and Colgate-Palmolive.

For a very small outlay the junk food makers gain massive control and mega financial benefits.

## **Junk pet-food company control**

- Control of the vet educational system.
- Direct access to vets and vet students through lectures and events.
- Control of the vet research industry. [No adverse research ever performed](#). Lots of product improvement and marketing strategies performed and masquerading as legitimate research.
- Control of the vet associations.
- Control of the vet periodicals.
- Control of the vet regulators (drawn from the universities and vet associations and so-called self-regulating profession).

- A vast army of unpaid junk pet-food salesmen who promote junk food.
- A large number of vet clinics that actually sell the junk.
- Celebrity vets who appear in junk pet-food advertisements.
- A self-interested vet profession that promotes itself as humane, kind and filled with integrity and thus providing innocence by association for the junk food makers.

Effectively, then, the vet profession acts as a product development, product protection and marketing arm of the junk pet-food industry.

When concerned pet owners criticise industrial junk food, vets almost invariably defend the 'complete and balanced formulas'. The veterinary profession provides a protective cordon around a cruel and noxious industry.

As can be seen from the history of the [Raw Meaty Bones campaign](#) the corrupt incompetent profession seeks to ignore and ostracise concerned, informed complainants.

Once yearly 500 word complaints published as election manifestos are tolerated as a pressure release valve. The corrupt vet establishment never pays heed to the allegations.

## **Corrupt benefits for the vet profession**

What monetary and other inducements does the vet profession get from the junk food makers?

- Easily the first benefit is lots of pets. Junk food companies relentlessly promote pet ownership.
- Lots of pets fed junk food means lots of junk food induced diseases.
- 'Sponsorship' of vet associations.
- Free and subsidised direct lectures to vet students and vets.
- Vets from third world and developing markets are flown to conferences and tours of Waltham and other junk pet-food establishments.
- Major junk food trade exhibits at vet conferences.
- Paid ads in periodicals.
- Sponsorships and chairs at vet schools.
- Sponsorships and 'research' positions at vet schools.
- Prizes, scrub tops emblazoned with company logos and other trinkets for vet students.
- Discount and other junk pet-food inducements.

## **Very real consequences**

The vet schools and RCVS are honour bound to identify significant animal health and welfare issues; to research those issues; discover control and therapy options; educate the student and wider vet profession; disseminate the information to a dependent public.

The vet schools and RCVS do none of those things. When presented with the incontrovertible evidence of the massive junk pet-food fraud, presented gift-wrapped between the covers of a

book, the vet schools and RCVS pretend not to notice or to take active steps to variously repress and rebut the evidence.

This is not just about a difference of clinical judgement and opinion. This massive fraud cannot be attributed to unfortunate oversight, incompetence or negligence. No, this is about a sinister on-going conspiracy costing our pets their health and wellbeing; costing pet owners and the global society many billions of pounds.

Turning to the text of Mr Price's 4 October 2017 letter we see alarming naiveté and callous indifference on display.

Chloe Newbold,  
Clerk to the Election Challenge Committee (Re: Lonsdale)

4 October 2017

### LETTER OF ADVICE

Re: Lonsdale v RCVS – Challenge to the validity of the 2017 Council Election (“the Election”)

This letter is further to my letter of advice dated 12 September 2017.

I asked for more detailed information from Professor Hammond and Professor Wood as to donations that their respective Schools have received from pet food manufacturers.

The initial responses from all three members of the Challenge Committee were set out in my letter dated 12 September 2017, but are repeated [in square brackets] below.

[Professor Hammond (Bristol Veterinary School)]

*“Bristol Veterinary School has previously received funding for research from pet food manufacturers as either the parent company or their subsidiary. Although I have not personally received or directly benefited from those funds, as Head of School I am ultimately responsible for approving the application and receipt of those funds and the research conducted based on that funding.*

*Second, as CEO of Langford Vets (a wholly owned subsidiary of the University), I approve the sale of prescription pet foods for animals under our care. This is no different to any commercial practice.”*

*“In 2015 the School received £19,000 from Waltham to fund the research of an individual in our welfare group (a PST doctoral researcher) for a research project: the funding was labelled a ‘collaborative behaviour and welfare award’.*

*In 2012 the school received £1800 from Hills to fund food for freshers week.*

*In 2012 Hills donated €10,000 for contribution to a stipend for a postgraduate student.*

*In 2016/17 hills have donated £1100 for prizes to be presented on graduation day for high achieving students”*

Professor Hammond shows himself and his school to be steeped in junk pet-food grease. His partial disclosure seeks to gloss over the dominant culture pervading all aspects of his vet school. Professor Hammond makes no mention of the [Anthrozoology Institute](#) associated with the vet school. Effectively this is a front for Mars for the promotion of pet ownership. First set up at the

University of Southampton by an ex-employee of Mars, [Dr John Bradshaw](#). Dr Bradshaw omits mention of his junk pet-food industry ties in his University entry. But other web pages reveal more about his [activities for Mars](#), the world's biggest junk pet-food merchant.

For many years the University was associated with the [Feline Advisory Bureau](#), an organisation dependent on the junk pet-food industry. Their 'scholar' [Professor Tim Gruffydd-Jones](#) played a big part at the vet school. A quick Google will reveal his name alongside junk pet-food companies. He told me how he thought my concerns about junk pet food were the outpourings of a feverish practitioner's mind as a result of my working in isolation for too long.

This [link](#) provides a Freedom of Information glimpse into the junk pet-food involvement in the Bristol Vet School.

#### [Professor James Wood \(Cambridge Veterinary School\)](#)

Professor Wood made enquiries, and was provided with the following information:

*"We do receive a grant from Royal Canin, albeit through the Veterinary School Trust, to fund our SCTS in Small Animal Medicine. In return, there is a small sum of money for research and travel, but they also gain access through the SCTS and [a Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Medicine] to our students for some nutrition teaching. They also support some of the Vet school student events.*

*Eukanuba also provide some discounted food to the Hospital, staff and students"*

Professor Wood said that the Royal Canin grant amounts to £74,070 over 3 years.

Professor Wood was economical with the information he provided. See here 2010 [extensively referenced correspondence](#) with Prof Duncan Maskell. Part of the exchange goes as follows:

TL: The climate of fear runs throughout the institutions. Everyone (as far as I can see) is tight lipped and engaged in self-censorship.

DM: I can only speak for Cambridge, but the idea that an institution as venerable as this one, with its tradition of complete academic freedom, could be bought off for a few quid given by a pet food company is fantasy and frankly insulting.

Clearly any fair minded, informed observer would conclude that Duncan Maskell is deluded.

Another Cambridge academic, Penny Watson, reveals her gross ignorance and bias in a paper entitled: [Raw Meaty Bones: Why do people feed them and is it a problem?](#)

2007 Freedom of Information applications revealed Cambridge [had secret deals with the junk pet-food companies](#) – and I would suggest most likely still does.

#### [Ms Elaine Acaster \(Retired Vice-Principal of the Royal Veterinary College\)](#)

Ms Acaster is clear that she has no conflict. She said:

*"In the light of Mr Lonsdale's comments and those of Richard and James, I should clarify that my roles at RVC placed me at a distance from the acquisition and use of funds, sale of pet food and any other forms*

*of support from Pet Food Companies. I did not have an academic appointment, nor am I Dr Acaster [as Mr Lonsdale described her].*

*I, therefore re-state that I believe I am not conflicted and am one of the small number of lay (non-veterinary qualified) members of the RCVS Council.”]*

Ms Acaster purports to be removed from the junk pet-food culture informing all aspects of the London vet school and by extension her activities at the RCVS. I believe that Ms Acaster has shown poor judgement and tries to put an improper spin on her activities. A fair-minded and informed observer would, I submit, take an entirely different view of Ms Acaster’s comments and thus would question her suitability for a place on the Challenge Committee.

As I understand it Ms Acaster is a dietician. As such she would be aware that a monotonous junk food diet for any animal is anathema.

In her role at the RCVS she appears to have supported the *status quo* that supports the mass poisoning of pets by vets, but now seeks to sit on a Committee looking into the alleged improper conduct, by the RCVS, of the 2017 Election.

In her role at the Royal Veterinary College she would have had a detailed knowledge of the culture and dynamics within the RVC.

Within the scope of this letter it’s impossible to list all junk pet-food influences at work within the RVC. However a few links may help to illustrate the range:

Mass poisoner Royal Canin, a division of the Mars Corporation providing basic information in the [Royal Canin - Vet Student Network](#)

[Product development and marketing](#) for mass poisoner Nestlé Purina.

[Professor David Church, BVSc PhD MACVSc MRCVS](#)

Deputy Principal and Vice Principal Students is an Australian veterinarian who previously worked at the University of Sydney. When speaking in support of the launch of Mars, Advance Professional Formula, Professor Church was asked about the advisability of feeding cats corn and dogs rice. He agreed it was ‘somewhat incongruous’.

[Professor Jill Maddison BVSc, DipVetClinStud, PhD, FACVSc, SFHEA, MRCVS](#)

Professor of General Practice is married to Professor Church. She is also a strong advocate for junk food feeding and was and maybe still is on the payroll of Nestlé.

Please [see the You Tube clip](#) commencing at 4.09 mins.

Whilst carbohydrate based junk food feeding of cats is the main determinant of diabetes in that species, the Royal Veterinary College nonetheless partners with Nestlé Purina on their product [development and marketing of junk food for diabetic cats](#).

As a former Vice-Principal of the Royal Veterinary College and a Councillor of the RCVS, Ms Acaster presumably owes a degree of loyalty to those organisations and a willingness to support the policy stance of those organisations. In this [link](#) you can see correspondence with the RCVS

and the Principal of the RVC, Professor Stuart Reid where both in his capacity as President of the RCVS and Principal of the London vet school, Professor Reid refuses to do anything about the junk pet-food/vet conspiracy.

I do not know if Ms Acaster's time at the RVC overlapped with that of Graham Milligan MA Vet MB MRCVS as Director of Clinical Services Division. However in this [link](#) we learn that Mr Milligan was formerly Director of Veterinary Strategic Initiatives for Hill's. Hill's is the junk pet-food division of Colgate-Palmolive and a major poisoner of pets throughout vet clinics and vet schools across the globe.

There appears to be something of a revolving door at the Royal Veterinary College and the junk pet-food industry. We know that Mr Milligan replaced Lynne Hill at the RVC. [Lynne Hill, we know, was European Marketing Manager for Hill's Pet Nutrition](#) before joining the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. In 2005/6 she was President of the RCVS and before that she was President of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association.

Ms Acaster, in her declaration, stated: 'My roles at RVC placed me at a distance from the acquisition and use of funds, sale of pet food and any other forms of support from Pet Food Companies.' However information on file indicates that Ms Acaster [bent the truth in her declaration](#) and likely knows a good deal more than she admits.

On the evidence adduced so far, it appears that Ms Acaster should recuse herself forthwith. If however she persists in her attempts to sit on the Challenge Committee then I believe that she should be asked for a much more comprehensive declaration about her role at the Royal Veterinary College, her role at the RCVS and to provide a clear and distinct statement on her attitudes to canned and packaged foods whether for humans or animals.

I now set out the responses received in response to my requests for further information:

#### [Professor Hammond](#)

- Please specify (approximately) what proportion of the overall funding of the School the funding in the relevant years represented on an annual basis.

As revealed in *Raw Meaty Bones* and the various [Freedom of Information enquiries](#), the [junk pet-food grease and oil applied to vet schools](#) simply lubricate the machine. For miniscule outlay the junk pet-food titans control the whole educational machine turning it into a massive tool of indoctrination.

The educational/indoctrination machine was constructed and is mostly funded by public funds. The junk pet-food industry, like many parasites, takes control of the host's communication and regulation systems. The result is massive socialisation of costs and massive privatisation of profits to three multinational corporations.

*Response: "The proportion of income varies from 0.01% to 0.14% of the total school income."*

Precisely the point. For miniscule outlay the junk food poisoners gain total control.

- Please explain the extent of your personal involvement, if any, in procuring or approving the application and receipt of the relevant funding, and the research conducted on the basis of such funding.

*Response: "I believe I have already answered this [see above]."*

Yes, Professor Hammond is responsible for serious errors of judgement. Any fair-minded observer would surely conclude that he should not be allowed to sit on any Challenge Committee.

#### Professor Wood

- Please explain in more detail how the Royal Canin grant is used or distributed. Where does the Veterinary School Trust fit in? What is the SCTS? How much is the sum of money for research and travel, and how does it work? Please explain how [Royal Canin] gains access through SCTS and a Senior Lecturer to students for nutrition training. What is the value of that access? What is the value of the support for student events?

*Response: "The RC grant is only used to fund one postgraduate training position, the SCTS (Senior Clinical Training Scholar, or resident). The Veterinary School Trust (VST) is a charity that supports the work of the Veterinary School. RC have a student contact and sponsor various student evening clinical events; these are organised through the student society and the Veterinary School has no formal knowledge of these; it has no direct financial value to the Vet School. The senior lecturer is now no longer directly involved in this programme and is funded by the University."*

Pure flannel, a disgrace. Professor Wood needs to confront the fact that his vet school is highly compromised by virtue of its shady deals.

- What is the value of the discounted food benefit to the Hospital, staff and students?

*Response: "Students do not benefit from discounted dog food. Over the last year, an estimate of the total benefit of discounted food was £8500; we estimate that around 15% of this went to staff, who purchase this. The saving compared to Internet prices of this food, based on review of 3 foods, varies between 13% and a loss (see specifics below\*)."*

From Professor Wood's response we learn that veterinary school staff are so ignorant of the harm done by junk food that they feed it to their own animals. We also learn that for very little financial inducement the vets and vet students at Cambridge University line up for the toxic junk.

- Specify (approximately) what proportion of the overall funding of the School or the department this funding represents or has represented on an annual basis?

*Response: "Working just on the direct contribution made through the VST, the proportion of income for the hospital, a component of the Department, is less than 1%."*

Yes, small amounts of junk food grease applied strategically silences squeaky wheels and lubricates the machine.

- Please explain the extent to which you are or were personally involved, if at all, in procuring or approving the application and receipt of the relevant funding, and/or the research conducted based on that funding.

*Response: "As head of department, I signed an agreement that had been drawn up by the University legal services following negotiation by others. I was not involved in the discussions, or the negotiations and am not directly involved in any of the research being conducted by the SCTS."*

Surely this [Sargent Schultz excuse](#) is beneath the dignity of the Head of Department! In any case I believe a fair minded observer would declare him unfit to sit on the Challenge Committee.

*"\*Specific price comparisons:*

*Eukanuba Veterinary Dermatitis 12kg – Average of 5 internet searches: £35.89. Sold to member of staff: £35.87. Saving: Nil*

*IAMS light dry 12KG – Average of 2 internet searches: £25.49. Sold to member of staff: £22.13. Saving 13%.*

*IAMS light dry 10 kg – Average of 4 internet searches £24.98. Sold to member of staff: £30.20. Can buy cheaper online."*

## **ADVICE AS TO THE CORRECT APPROACH IN RELATION TO AN ALLEGATION OF APPARENT BIAS ON THE PART OF MEMBERS OF THE CHALLENGE COMMITTEE**

I think it would be helpful to expand on the advice given in a previous letter as to how the "fair-minded and informed observer" is to be recognised.

I refer to an extract from the Privy Council case of ***Holmes v Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [2011] UKPC 48***, at paragraph 24 of the Judgment of Lord Wilson:

"The question is whether the fair minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility that the tribunal was biased": ***Porter v Magill [2002] 2AC 357***, at para 103, per Lord Hope. In ***Helow v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2008] UKHL 62***, Lord Hope described the attributes of such an observer in terms on which it would be impossible to improve:

[1] The fair-minded and informed observer is a relative newcomer among the select group of personalities who inhabit our legal village and are available to be called upon when a problem arises that needs to be solved objectively...

[2] *The observer who is fair-minded is the sort of person who always reserves judgment on every point until she has seen and fully understood both sides of the argument. She is not unduly sensitive or suspicious .... Her approach must not be confused with that of the person who has brought the complaint. The "real possibility" test ensures that there is this measure of*

*detachment. The assumptions that the complainer makes are not to be attributed to the observer unless they can be justified objectively. But she is not complacent either. She knows that fairness requires that a judge must be, and must be seen to be, unbiased. She knows that judges, like anybody else, have their weaknesses. She will not shrink from the conclusion, if it can be justified objectively, that things that they have said or done or associations that they have formed may make it difficult for them to judge the case before them impartially.*

[3] *Then there is the attribute that the observer is “informed”. It makes the point that, before she takes a balanced approach to any information she is given she will take the trouble to inform herself on all matters that are relevant. She is the sort of person who takes the trouble to read the text of an article as well as their headlines. She is able to put whatever she has read or seen into its overall social, political or geographical context. She is fair-minded, so she will appreciate that the context forms an important part of the material which she must consider before passing judgement.”*

In the *Holmes* case, the Privy Council had to decide whether there was any merit in Mr Holmes complaint of apparent bias in relation to three members of the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal College, which had found numerous charges of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect proved against Mr Holmes, and directed the Registrar to remove his name from the Register. The Privy Council applied the principles laid down by Lord Hope as set out above, and found that there was no real possibility or appearance of bias on the part of any of the Committee members involved. In relation to one member of the Committee, Lord Wilson said as follows:

*“Mr Holmes makes a final complaint of apparent bias which falls into a different category. It relates to Ms Shield. Prior to April 2007, there was controversy about whether the practice of docking a dog’s tail accorded with responsible veterinary practice. The controversy largely came to an end on the coming into force of s.6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which made it a criminal offence to remove a dog’s tail otherwise than for the purpose of its medical treatment. Mr Holmes had been appointed as Honorary Veterinary Surgeon by the Council for Docked Breeds which strongly opposed the reform. He had had a high profile on behalf of the campaign to preserve a general right to dock a dog’s tail. In support of the reform, however, had been “Vets against Docking”, supported by the College, which argued that docking represented an unjustified mutilation of the dog. On the sixth day of the hearing before the DC Mr Holmes unsuccessfully objected to the continued participation on it of Ms Shield on the ground that, as he had just discovered, she had been a signatory in support of “Vets against Docking”, as was visible on its website which remained online.*

*In the Board’s view no appearance of bias on the part of Ms Shield was generated by the professional stance opposite to that of Mr Holmes which she had adopted in the largely historical debate about an issue in no way related to those raised in the proceedings...”*

This extract from the judgment in *Holmes* provides an example of the test of the “*fair-minded and informed observer*” in action.

My advice to the members of the Challenge Committee is that they should apply the principles laid down by Lord Hope, when considering all the relevant information disclosed by members of the Committee, and deciding whether or not it is necessary for any of them to recuse themselves from sitting to hear the challenge brought by Mr Lonsdale.

Mr Price the Legal Assessor employs much circumlocution and various shades of opinion. As per my [8 October 2017 letter](#), I believe that Mr Price should recuse himself from the role of Legal Assessor.

By any objective fair-minded principles, whether or not laid down by Lord Hope, the three current members of the Challenge Committee are revealed as small cogs in a very big machine. They should recuse themselves.

The Committee will bear in mind that the pool of unelected members of Council, who would be eligible to be members of the Challenge Committee, is very limited, and Mr Lonsdale is likely to object to any potential member who has any involvement with the veterinary profession, and all organisations or institutions connected with it.

Very true. But that is no reason to stack the Committee with obviously biased members. [I have repeatedly asked for an explanation](#) as to the alternative provisions available in the event that unbiased individuals become hard to find.

The Committee will, of course, be aware that it is not required to pass judgement on the merits of Mr Lonsdale's campaign against the manufacturers of pet foods, but is required to decide whether or not the result of the Council Election 2017 is invalid, for the reasons advanced by Mr Lonsdale in his grounds of challenge.

The exercise of 'undue influence' in four different categories are the [reasons for my challenge](#).

From the available evidence I believe that the current Committee are shown to have either exerted undue influence or been subjected to undue influence in many different respects. I believe that an objective, informed, fair minded observer would conclude that the Committee members have insufficient understanding and regard for what 'undue influence' means. Consequently they are unfit to sit in judgement on this very issue.

I advise that copies of this Letter of Advice be sent to the College and Mr Lonsdale. They should be invited to make any submissions they may have in relation to the allegations of apparent bias made against the three members of the Challenge Committee, within 7 days.

It will then be for the members of the Challenge Committee to decide whether, applying the principles outlined by Lord Hope, it is necessary for any member of the Committee to recuse him/herself from hearing this challenge. This letter can be copied to members of the Challenge Committee, for information only at this stage. Arrangements will have to be made for the Committee to meet to decide this matter once submissions have been received from the College, and Mr Lonsdale.

**Richard Price OBE QC**

**Legal Assessor**

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons are accused of exercising undue influence in the 2017 RCVS Elections. By what rule of law, by what legal principles is it appropriate to seek submissions of the accused/defendant in an action?

I recognise that an accused person may object to a jury member. But I am unaware that an accused can actively promote the *inclusion* of a preferred jury member.

Would the Legal Assessor advise?

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Lonsdale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Tom Lonsdale

