

## **APPOINTEES TO THE CMA'S VETERINARY ADVISORY PANEL**

### **Abi Harland**

Abi qualified as a veterinary nurse in 2017, while working at an independent practice. She currently works at a Medivet first opinion practice in Dorset. She has worked in referral hospitals and first opinion practices for Linnaeus, VetPartners and Vets4Pets. She has a keen interest in Schedule 3 procedures and wound management.

### **Helen Rippin**

Helen qualified as a veterinary nurse in 2007. She currently works for an independent practice in South Wales, where she is a part owner. She is also a student nurse Clinical Coach and has a particular interest in surgery and anaesthesia.

### **Alistair Townsend**

Alistair qualified as a vet in 1995. After roles in independent small animal practices and an overseas university, in 2002 he took on his own independent first opinion practice, growing to be a three-site practice. In 2017, he sold his practice to Medivet, becoming Clinical Director then Regional Director, followed by Deputy Head of Clinical Operations. In 2019, Alistair returned to independent practice, working as a night vet providing emergency services in Kent. In 2020 he founded a new independent first opinion practice in the South-East of England, where he currently practices. Alistair starts a PGCert in Small Animal Dentistry in October 2024.

### **Cees Bennett**

Cees qualified as a vet in 2004. He began his veterinary career in HM Forces Royal Army Veterinary Corps. In 2011 he founded a first-opinion practice with Vets4Pets and a second site in 2013 inside Pets at Home (under the Vets4Pets brand). He was also a member of the Vets4Pets Joint Venture Council. In 2017 Cees joined CVS as a Regional Director and was later Director of Greenfield Developments. From 2015 to 2023 Cees was a Practice Standards Assessor for the RCVS. In 2021 he founded an independent first-opinion practice in Lincolnshire where he currently works.

### **Caroline Gardner**

Caroline qualified as a vet in 1996, gained her certificate in small animal surgery in 2004 (whilst working in practice), and since 2015 has been an RCVS Advanced Practitioner. She has spent her career within a mixed and small animal first opinion practice in Southwest Wales, becoming part-owner there in 2009 and clinical director in 2021 (until 2023). Her practice was acquired by IVC in 2021. Caroline still works at this practice (and another local IVC practice) in clinical practice and as a peripatetic surgeon. She is a member of the IVC Small Animal Clinical Board.

### **Claire Smith**

Claire qualified as a vet 2015 and spent the first few years of her career working for an independent first opinion practice. She then worked as a locum at a mixture of independently owned and corporate practices, before founding her own practice in Kent in 2020. Claire has a particular interest in emotional intelligence, including how vets engage with clients and how teams work together.