Secretary’s Report to AGM January 18th 2019

The Association has made progress this year. We had a meeting in January when one of our members, Paul Williams M.P. who is still a practising GP, spoke with Hannah Davies from the Health Partnership for Northern England about the challenges facing the NHS and we debated ways forward. This meeting attracted a big audience of Labour Party members and supporters.

We then had a meeting with Sharon Hodgson M.P. at the Labour Party Regional Conference in the spring which was also well attended. We discussed Public Health and agreed to work with Sharon Hodgson to formulate a policy statement on Public Health which was done. We have rather been overtaken by events by the massive cuts predicted for Public Health and I hope we can discuss how we take our campaign forward at the meeting in January 2019.

We have since had two all member meetings (as distinct from the public speaker ones). At the first we regularised our structure and officers. At the most recent we discussed a proposal from one of our younger members,Andrew Hedges, to lobby local authorities about the importance of period poverty and the need to provide sanitary products throughout the North East. We subsequently wrote to all local authorities in the North East the majority of which supported our policy. Two did not reply. Our motion has also been successfully debated at several CLPs.

We have now followed a policy of encouraging our membership to affiliate to the local constituencies. We are already affiliated to Durham, North Durham, South Shields, Jarrow and Tynemouth, and applications are in the pipeline for several others. Since the SHA is affiliated to the Labour Party nationally there is no valid reason why we cannot affiliate.

As members know CLPs have different structures. Some have delegate GCs, others All Member Meetings. If the SHA affiliates then we are entitled to delegates to the GC (where applicable) and nominations to the Executive or Business Committee. There is usually a section for “Affiliated Organisations”. The SHA could send a delegate if there is a vacancy, or would have to take part in a run off with other organisations such as Trade Unions. In my experience these sections are rarely full.

I should stress that we affiliate as a regional branch with 70 members which will probably give you greater representation at the Constituency.

If you wish to affiliate to your constituency please go through the Secretary. The SHA will have to pay a fee!

Our affiliation to the Regional Board and individual Constituencies does raise our profile in the Region and hopefully ensures health issues are more widely discussed.

Most recently we have been involved in the selection of a candidate for the North of Tyne mayorality which has been complicated and time consuming. The main reason was confusing advice from Labour Party Region. We may be involved as a nominating organisation in CLPs where we are affiliated. In which case I think we should establish a code of practice. I would recommend that the members living within the CLP concerned should recommend whether to nominate and who to nominate with assistance from the Association if a ballot is needed.

I should stress our main purpose is to discuss and campaign on health issues rather than become embroiled in the internal politics of the Labour Party.

Finally I must apologise to members about some confusion with membership lists. If re-elected I promise to sort this out.

Best Wishes



